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THE DUTY OF OPPOSITION

Need we say that in vitality and virtuosity Mr. Churchill's performance on Tuesday came up to his customary level? He retains all his majestic self-confidence, his unshakeable courage and his rhetorical art. These are indispensable qualities in a leader and he knows how to trade on them. He will get the vote of confidence on which he insists, but a high proportion of the members will pay their tribute with a sense of humiliation, exasperation and defeat. This brilliant speech persuaded nobody and removed none of our doubts and anxieties. On the contrary it compelled us to realise that the real issue is neither Singapore nor Libya, nor even production, but the claim of this exceptional man to conduct the war as if it were a personal combat. Mr. Churchill paid his customary lip service to the traditions of Parliamentary government. The critics shall speak their minds with perfect freedom, but he assures them in advance that he will pay no attention whatever to anything they may say, and if anyone hints that his colleagues are inadequate, he will treat their doubts as an attack upon himself. These are not the ways of a democratic leader.

This pose of Mr. Churchill's will presently compel critics to change their tactics. Hitherto we have all been silenced by the gratitude his personal services have earned. No one else could have rallied the country as he did in the dark summer of 1940. No one else could have silenced so effectively on both sides of the Atlantic the enemies of Russia, nor completed so happily the conversion of the Americans to belligerency. We have hitherto regarded him as the indispensable leader because we feared that, if he were to fall, his successor might revive the policy of appeasement and end the war by sacrificing everything for which we have fought. That danger is past. Since the United States and the Soviet Union became our Allies, a peace by surrender has become unthinkable. If Mr. Churchill were to go, the moral leadership would pass to Mr. Roosevelt. At home, with infinite regret we should lose the inspiration of a man whose place in our affections is unique, but we should return to our tradition of self-government. Mr. Churchill's gesture of taking on his own shoulders the entire responsibility for the war may be dramatically effective, but it is at variance with the Constitution. This country has never, since Cromwell, been governed by one man. It has been governed by a Cabinet of equals, collectively responsible to Parliament. The alternative to Mr. Churchill is not another and less eloquent leader. It is a working Cabinet, of which we hope Mr. Churchill would remain the head.

The real trouble is that Mr. Churchill's claim that he is solely responsible is more than a pose; it may be an apt description of what happens in the present War Cabinet. No member of it has the stature to face him in discussion as an equal, and some of its members are so burdened with departmental duties that they cannot have time to master the reams of paper and the mazes of detail on which an informed opinion must be based. Mr. Churchill is mistaken in supposing that we are calling for scapegoats. On the contrary, we are ready to believe that some serious mistakes in the recent conduct of the war were his and his alone. We are not at all critical of the relative neglect of the Far Eastern Front: we have argued that our resources should be concentrated against Hitler. But that does not cover the decisions to defend Hong Kong, or to send our battleships to Singapore without an aircraft-carrier. Again, Mr. Churchill is mistaken in supposing that any sober advocate of a second front in the West imagined that we could take the offensive there and in Libya at once: the two were alternatives. Having chosen Libya, why did he send a numerically inferior force to attack so brilliant a general as Rommel, while four million men or more marked time in these islands? Has he even now made good this inferiority? We do not doubt his statement that production in recent months has increased enormously, but there is reason to believe that it is still sadly below our industrial capacity. We shall not get a co-ordinated effort until we appoint a single Minister of Production, with powers such as Mr. Nelson wields in the United States. Finally, the most gratuitous and calamitous error of all reflects the temperament and the past record of one man and one man alone. Mr. Churchill has been unwilling to give so much as a gracious word to win the support of India and Burma. In his exclusion of India from the Atlantic Charter, as in his handling of U Saw, he did his best to fling an Empire away. To-day, behind the curtain of silence, we are paying at the scene of action for this Imperial arrogance.

To sum up, then, if we could state our position in parliamentary terms, we would gladly support an amendment that re-affirmed our confidence in Mr. Churchill's leadership, on condition that he remodels the War Cabinet, appoints a Minister of Production, and offers self-government to India and Burma. These are not, as Mr. Churchill's pugnacity suggests, the demands and carpings of enemies. They are the indispensable conditions of an ungrudging support without which many who have been his advocates must henceforth become his opponents.

Russia's successes to the South-West of Leningrad hearten us once more, and so does the brilliant attack by Allied forces on a great Japanese convoy in Macassar Straits.

Setback in Libya

In Libya the intentions underlying General Rommel's counterstroke have yet to be ascertained. His initial success in defeating and driving back our armoured and other advanced forces may embolden this redoubtable opportunist to attempt the re-conquest, if not of the whole of Cyrenaica, at least of Benghazi. More probably he has a more limited objective—the destruction of our forward supply bases and communications. By thus disrupting such preparations as General Ritchie may have made for an attack on El Agheila he may be confident of gaining the time required for further reinforcements to reach him from Italy; for clearly the Axis does not propose to relinquish its hold in North Africa. But whatever be General Rommel's immediate tactical designs, the come-back which he has staged has had the effect of creating in this country a profound uneasiness and mistrust of the higher direction of the war exercised from Whitehall. Public concern has been aroused which the Prime Minister's version of the campaign will do little to allay. Mr. Churchill stated that, with an army 750,000 strong in the Middle East, the plan approved by him was to adopt a "delaying," defensive attitude in the Levant and to concentrate "overwhelming strength" against General Rommel. Yet General Auchinleck, the size of whose total striking force was bound to depend on the strength of his armoured components and transport, could never, as Mr. Churchill now tells us, put more than 45,000 men in action against an enemy force "much more than double as strong." The result was that we risked failure to knock out Rommel's ten divisions with our initial blow, and secondly, that our offensive (contrary to every lesson of this war) proceeded *diminuendo*, and that we must have reached El Agheila in strength ludicrously insufficient to attain the campaign's one important objective—command of Tripoli and the Central Mediterranean.

A Unanimous New World

The Pan-American Conference at Buenos Ayres ended in what is officially described as a "diplomatic victory" for Washington. This species of victory may be defined as one which belongs to the world of appearance. After Argentina had made it clear that she will go her own way, she voted with all the twenty-one republics for a resolution "recommending" a breach of diplomatic relations with the Axis Powers. Argentina's acting president, Señor Castillo, is a Fascist, and she has a large German and Italian population. But Brazil's dictator, Dr. Vargas, is even more openly Fascist, and she has an even more numerous German population. The difference between the two lies in their economic relationship with the United States. Argentina's exports compete with those of the Middle West and demand a European market, whereas Brazil can sell her tropical produce to North America. Accordingly for many years she has revolved happily in the orbit of Washington, while Argentina has asserted her independence. On the other hand, the second of the dissentient republics, Chile, seems to be swinging into line. She fears an attack from Japan, and is therefore anxious to make sure of the military support of the United States. Her domestic politics are much more advanced than those of Argentina, for a Popular Front has what looks like a secure majority. But internal politics seem to have little bearing on the external orientation of these republics. The Conference, with a unanimity no less impressive, gave its approval to the Atlantic Charter. It is to be congratulated on its powers of divination, for it is to be presumed that it would not have adopted this document, unless it had understood what it means.

The Labour Front in America

Mr. John Lewis's proposal to amalgamate the A.F. of L. and the C.I.O. into a single body has met with an unfavourable reception from both parties. It was felt by the leaders of both sections of the American Trade Union movement that such a fusion would lead, under present circumstances, not to collaboration, but to a struggle for positions of power. A plan of joint action, with the least possible disturbance to existing office-holders, seems preferable both to Mr. William Green, of the A.F. of L., and to Mr. Philip Murray, who is Mr. Lewis's successor as leader of the C.I.O. This is probably the common-sense view. Obviously, it would be a great deal better for the American working-class to have one labour movement than two, and fusion ought to come in the longer run as a result of joint action now. But a pitched battle for power between the followers of Mr. Lewis and his opponents, complicated by the inevitable manoeuvring between craft union and industrial union advocates, could do only harm, and would very probably end up in a further secession.

Home Front (*by an Industrial Correspondent*)

There is no doubt that the strikers at Betteshanger Colliery in Kent broke the law. But is that the real issue? According to the Ministry of Labour arbitrator the miners can produce about three times as much coal as they do. The miners retort that the arbitrator found the fumes of the mine so overpowering that he was unable to assess the situation. Whatever the truth of this, the Government cannot neglect the allegation that miners in many parts of the country find the greatest difficulty even in earning the county minimum wage, because mine-owners prefer to work the worst seams on which they can cover the costs, while they cannot in any case retain excess profits. After the war, they argue, the newer seams will be the most profitable in competitive conditions. Therefore the miners work in the worst possible conditions and we have reports that cannot be ignored, from some of the great consumers of coal, that the quality of the coal steadily deteriorates, causing trouble in the boilers, interfering with production and putting unnecessary strain on transport. Would not Mr. Bevin and Mr. Attlee agree that we have here an excellent instance of the muddle caused by half-retaining a system which is in any case out of date? We do not take over the mines, but we do not allow coal-owners to charge the prices they like or to retain the profits they could make. The confused conditions lead to inefficiency, strikes and prison sentences.

* * *

The big Anglo-Soviet Trade Union meeting in the Empress Hall last Sunday was the first occasion in which the Soviet Trade Union delegation that has been touring this country during the past month or so has recorded anything of its impressions. Even now, Mr. Shvernik, the leader of the delegation, is evidently being very cautious in what he says. The key sentence in his speech was that in which he declared that "there are not a few unused reserves"; and for this assertion he went on to say that the greatest successes in production had been achieved in those factories in which shop stewards were paying most attention to production problems and being most fully consulted by the management. While these things were being said in London, Trade Union delegate conferences in Manchester and in Birmingham were providing more evidence of waste and inefficiency, and were demanding the recognition of shop stewards' committees for regular consultation in all factories. This demand is undoubtedly spreading very fast, and is now beginning to get real support from the Trade Union leadership as well as from the "Left wing" in the workshops. The weakness of the shop stewards' movement up to the present has been that in many factories the stewards were chosen rather for energy and political forwardness than for competence as organisers of the productive effort. But this situation is now changing, and the shop stewards are becoming both more responsible and more representative.

* * *

Is the women's labour problem being mishandled? A good deal of evidence seems to suggest that it is. In the first place, there seems to be a good deal of indiscriminate bullying of women who are called up for interview, without nearly enough enquiry designed to find out whether they are or are not giving the best service in the jobs they are doing now. One hears of too many cases of women coming back in tears from their interviews and being badly unsettled even when they are already engaged on essential work. The second charge is that women are being told they will be called up at certain dates, are then leaving or even being discharged from their present jobs, and are then not called up at all, or, at any rate, without serious delays, with the result that they are left penniless and their work is wasted. The third charge, repeated again and again at conferences of factory delegates, is that women sent to war factories quite often find themselves left with practically nothing to do. Finally, there is the charge that the arrangements for getting children looked after while the women go out to work are appallingly inadequate.

THE CASE OF "PICTURE POST"

We wonder whether Mr. Brendan Bracken ever read *Disenchantment* by C. E. Montague. There a brave soldier and a great journalist described the effect on disillusioned troops of newspapers which answered none of the bitter questions they asked as they ploughed about in a sea of mud, which assumed that the soldier was always cracking jokes as he killed Germans and which left him with the impression that the truth about the war was being hidden from him. We remind Mr. Bracken of this book because the withdrawal of the official support which ensured *Picture Post* a circulation in the Near East suggests that he has not yet discovered the simple truth—that the only good propaganda is done by people with a critical outlook. Ask any body of troops anywhere, ask the American public, ask the Dominions—always you will get the same reply that no one pays attention to the orthodox "yes-man" as a propagandist or to newspapers whose notion of cheering us up is to give the lie to our own observation by telling us that everything is fine. The critical and constructive mind which faces the facts is listened to with respect over the wireless and in the press. He is the only good propagandist, because he does not indulge in propaganda.

Picture Post for January 31st, 1942, gives the facts. The Ministry of Information has a special scheme by which papers as various as the *Illustrated London News*, *Vogue*, the *Sphere*, the *Illustrated* and *Picture Post* are purchased in bulk in this country and sold in the Near East. Those who buy them may include some Arabs, but they must mainly consist of British, Indian and Dominion troops. Amongst these papers the subsidy has been withdrawn from *Picture Post*—

ADVERTISED GOODS.—The fact that goods made of raw materials in short supply owing to war conditions are advertised in this paper should not be taken as an indication that they are necessarily available for export.

CENSORSHIP REGULATIONS allow readers to post this paper to any part of the British Empire (excepting Eire and Northern Ireland) and to any country of the American Continent (excepting dependencies of enemy-occupied countries) but readers are advised to consult a Post Office or a newsagent before attempting to post elsewhere.

POSTAGE on this issue is: Inland, 1½d.; Foreign, 1d.; Canada, 1d.

and only from *Picture Post*. This, as Mr. Tom Hopkinson, the Editor, points out in his article, is not a matter of financial interest to the paper, which could easily sell in this country several times over the 10,000 copies that have in the past gone to the Near East. Nor was the subsidy paid to the newspaper; it went to a wholesaler. Therefore *Picture Post's* protest is a part of its disinterested battle for a vital freedom.

Mr. Hopkinson's account of events makes it clear that the withdrawal of this support was on political grounds. It was first withdrawn in the case of an issue of *Picture Post* in November which contained an article by Mr. Edward Hulton reprinting criticisms from the American magazines *Life* and *Look* about the quantity and quality of American aid. Was it considered better for readers in the Near East to believe in the arrival of gigantic supplies from the United States, when Americans themselves stated that they were only arriving in a trickle? (The American papers carrying the facts were of course on sale as usual!) *Picture Post* explained correctly the reasons for not expecting the high results in the Libyan campaign which were prophesied, and *Picture Post* has proved precisely correct. Tom Wintringham's article which appeared on December 20th proved prophetic about the Libyan campaign. This was apparently too much for the Ministry of Information which withdrew its support.

We can imagine few things more likely to cause discontent amongst soldiers abroad than the belief that they are only allowed to know what the Government thinks it good for them to know. We can imagine few more obvious blows at the basic principle of press freedom which Mr. Bracken himself so ably championed in a speech in September, 1941, which is quoted by *Picture Post*. "A free press is the most watchful sentry of the State: a 'yes-press' is fatal to good government."

PREMIER, CABINET, AND PARLIAMENT

Of the deep hold of Mr. Churchill upon the mind and heart of the British people there can be no more doubt than upon the magnitude of the services he has rendered to his country. But there is a growing danger, in the methods of government for which he stands the sponsor, that we may lose sight of the basis upon which it is built.

That basis is a Cabinet system in which, to be sure, the Prime Minister is emphatically the leader. He has the means at his disposal to direct, to energise, to determine. Historically, a good Cabinet has always been one in which the moral supremacy of the Prime Minister has been emphatic and unmistakable. But that moral supremacy, in our system, has always been the outcome of ideas tested in two essential ways. They have to run the gauntlet of criticism from colleagues to whom are given the full materials for knowledge. They have to maintain the approval of public opinion and of a House of Commons on the alert to discover inadequacies and to correct mistakes. Parliamentary democracy lives or dies by its ability to prevent the political leader of the nation from slipping into a position where he need not give an account of what he is doing, where he comes to feel the sole master of the decisions that he makes.

Everyone knows that crisis government tends to elevate the position of the Prime Minister. It makes much of his activities secret; it makes many of his relations obscure to the public view; it renders the criticism of his policy by the House of Commons immensely more difficult than in normal times. It is therefore far more urgent that the relation of the Prime Minister to his colleagues should be one in which we can be certain that the examination they make of his proposals, his negations not less than his affirmations, should be thorough, incisive, and complete. This is especially the case with a Prime Minister like Mr. Churchill, of an energetically positive temper, not easily accustomed to listen to the other side, rarely tempted to examine the foundations of his thinking, very quickly convinced by the ardent flow of his own passionate eloquence. Mr. Churchill is fond of power; and he is a man of strong, even impetuous, convictions. The open mind, the sceptical mind, the mind that seeks to look all round a subject—these have never interested him greatly. Amid all his remarkable gifts, neither an interest in the unfamiliar, nor a grasp of the impersonal forces, has a high place. He goes forward with incredible courage and unbreakable resolution; but he does not like to be stopped to be questioned either about the purpose of his journey or what he proposes to do when he has arrived.

In a formal way he treats the House of Commons well. He speaks to it constantly, he offers it graceful gestures, like the recent abandonment of his proposed broadcast; he takes few Ministers from outside the charmed circle of its expectations. But it must be observed that, outside the formal realm, he drives it on a very tight rein. He is not tender with the critics who put their fingers on weak spots. Pearl Harbour, like the Dardanelles and Mesopotamia, was the instant subject of an independent inquiry the results of which were at once made public by Mr. Roosevelt; there has been no such inquiry into any of this Government's mistakes. Sir John Wardlaw-Milne has effectively established his original point about production, we know of nothing done to meet it. Labour members have spoken with knowledge and force on a fuller use of trade union knowledge and skill, on the economies unification might effect in mines and transport, on the dangers of wartime controls staffed by men with a dual allegiance; if Mr. Churchill has heard their speeches, he has done nothing about them. His relations with the House are like those of a husband with a wife who may speak freely at home but must not interfere with office matters. How else can one interpret the threat that this week's debate may end with a vote of confidence?

Mr. Lloyd George's Cabinet worked well in the last war because there were in it at least three men whose views he could not afford to neglect. The House of Commons he led, though in membership as electorally old as the present House, was a more satisfactory body because the Opposition in it was real and effective; more, the fact that some of the Labour leaders were in the Government did not mean that the Labour Party in Parliament thought an attack upon the Cabinet a matter akin to treason. Coalition government does not mean the evasion of party issues for the sake of an artificial unity; it means the subordination of party issues to an overriding common purpose. But that means a Government of great measures, a House occupied with great themes, a public opinion alert and interested, a future which men can see purposefully shaped in the present they hold. These things, in their turn, have an immense bearing upon political warfare. For just as Britain's ability to "take it" was the turning-point which made victory possible, so Britain's ability to make the character of its war-effort the deliberate basis of its reconstruction may be the turning-point which makes the victory the prelude to peace. But that ability will not be called into play while the Cabinet and the Commons co-operate with Mr. Churchill to maintain his dangerous distinction between measures for victory and measures for peace.

The burden of office upon a Prime Minister is great in any circumstances; in wartime it is almost unendurable. There is an unconscious temptation to the man who holds it to seek refuge from its burden by a number of expedients. He remembers how much greater is the knowledge at his disposal than any his critics can possess. He emphasises to himself that the men with whom he agrees are a tried and tested team, that the attacks upon them come from envy and jealousy and faction. He knows that he must husband his physical resources; and he infers that it is wise not to overload his brief moments of relaxation with the men who may put him on his mettle. To any Prime Minister the power to look at himself from the outside is hard to come by; the very fact that he is Prime Minister means that he is the half-conscious centre of a conspiracy to deprive him of that power. In wartime this is ten times more the case than in peace; for in wartime the pressure to wishful thinking is ten times more strong. Yet it is just because of this that the character of our historic institutions must be more jealously safeguarded then than when the absence of external danger ensures their normal operation.

For, as Bagehot was fond of insisting, the whole fabric of our institutions is based upon discussion. Our executive Government is a central committee, surrounded and served by a mass of departmental committees. Parliament is a grand committee, to praise, to blame, above all to criticise and to express grievance. Grant, as everyone must grant, that in dangerous times there is need for concentrated power, it cannot fulfil its end unless its objects and its methods are the subject of constant scrutiny. They serve Mr. Churchill badly in his Cabinet who do not compel him to find convincing reasons both for the things he proposes to do, and for the things he proposes not to do. They serve him badly in Parliament when they do not make him feel that he must constantly look to the foundations of his system, be constantly on the look-out for new ability, be constantly ready to understand that there are times when even angry criticism is more useful than professional applause.

Government in wartime has, in a parliamentary democracy, two fundamental instruments by the use of which its quality can be tested: it can keep people talking and it can keep people hoping; in a sense, indeed, it keeps them hoping because it keeps them talking. The danger of a democracy at war is inertia among those whom the daily tasks absorb in small things, and of unimaginative routine among those who handle great affairs. Mr. Churchill risks the growth of this inertia because so much is centralised in his will. We are interested in him; we give our affection to him; we assume that he is looking after everything. But there come moments when we are aware that he cannot look after everything, moments when there is clear evidence of failure here, of muddle there, of fatigue somewhere else. The remedy is to make the Cabinet come alive, not as an annexe to the Prime Minister, but as a living fountain of ideas which keeps the House of Commons occupied with great measures. For a Parliament which can handle great measures in wartime gives to ordinary people the energy which comes from hope; and a people convinced that it has the right to hope is a people whose spirit is unconquerable. That is Mr. Churchill's own spirit; he needs to train his colleagues to its exercise and to liberate Parliament for its rapid utilisation.

Harold J. Laski

A LONDON DIARY

For a Director - General of the B.B.C. Mr. Ogilvie carried, perhaps, too much charm and not enough weight; a liberal-minded man, he willed the good, but was not sufficiently strong or effective at the head of an organisation where everyone jostles for a foothold. For weeks now the issue of his resignation has been in the balance. That he should resign in order that a big business executive should have his unimpeded way in reorganising the central institution of our national culture is an irony which fits only too well with much else that is happening. The B.B.C. with 10,000 employees (3,000 before the war) and a couple of million extra revenue for its immensely enlarged activities is indeed a big business needing organisation by a man of Mr. Foot's experience. Sir Cecil Graves, whom we all remember from the days of Lord Reith at the B.B.C., comes back presumably to represent the interests of the consumer. Sir Cecil again is a popular man, a Roman Catholic and a courteous gentleman; he is not likely in the present set-up to have a decisive voice. It would have been better if the facts had been recognised from the beginning of the war. The nominal freedom of the B.B.C. must be illusory in war-time; bits of freedom remain, but the real control necessarily falls into the hands of the Ministry of Information. Mr. Brenden Bracken must answer for the B.B.C.; it is he who has the last word. If the B.B.C. had been from the outset of the war recognised as a Government department, then its officials would have had more say in the policy they administer. By clinging to the shadow of independence the substance of legitimate influence which their experience and ability could have commanded has been lost. No wonder the B.B.C. jest is that they now have one Foot in the Graves.

* * *

For more than five centuries Sussex was the "black country" of England. And now I find very knowledgeable people discussing a proposal to get the iron of the Weald mined again for our present devouring war needs. If the scheme proves feasible, residents of rural and sub-suburban Sussex who know Hammer Pond only as a neat pool of ornamental water and Cinderbank as a spot not in the least suggestive of a slag-heap, will see these names come into their own grimy meaning again. It was from the Sussex forges that the first complete cast-iron English cannon came. Travellers of a later period noted the vandalism of Sussex; its noise, and the fact that the fine trees were ruthlessly sacrificed to the iron industry. The last big forge closed down at Ashburnham a few years after the Battle of Trafalgar. The trees were beginning to fail. Much more important was that coal had replaced wood in iron smelting, and the industry had moved up to the coalfields. A Mr. George Chambers, writing in 1880, found, indeed, yet another reason for "the collapse of a staple trade." In his view "the smelting of iron might have been going on even now in Sussex but for the fatal facilities which the workmen possessed half a century ago for the acquisition of intoxicating liquors, especially spirits, rendered accessible to them by the vast amount of smuggling which took place on the south coast." Well, now coal is more accessible, and any Sussex pub-keeper will tell you that the "fatal facilities" mentioned by Mr. Chambers no longer exist.

* * *

Greece, which is to have relief, is in a different category from most of the other hungry countries of Europe. First, it is more hungry than the others; secondly, there is no food there for the Germans to take away for munitions instead of the food that is given out under neutral supervision. Thirdly, there is a neutral country next door through which food can be obtained and administered. Therefore, I am not surprised to find the authorities stressing that it is a unique case—just as the relief of Polish refugees in Russia is also a unique, though a quite different, case. Some who recall the appalling misery of Europe at the end of the last war, the hunger and the disease that went with it, have been asking off and on during the last two years whether the controlled feeding of other hard areas is impossible. The case for attempting a repetition of the Hoover feeding of Belgium in the last war has been made in moderate and sensible language by Mr. Roy Walker in a book called *Famine in Europe* (Andrew Dakers, 5*s*.) Mr. Walker is a pacifist, and his book is introduced by Mr. Middleton Murry and the Bishop of Birmingham. He fails to do justice to the difference between the Kaiser's and Hitler's Germany, and he under-estimates the shipping and administrative problems in a war in which Britain is itself blockaded. Germany is the best fed part of the Continent; the German scheme of feeding the *Herrenvolk* and using rationing as a weapon to mark different degrees of subjection is more responsible than the British blockade for the misery of Belgium and other occupied countries. Mr. Walker points out that, if the spirit to resist Nazism is to survive in occupied countries, "two things are essential. They must not despair of an eventual British victory. [Which brings it to a military, not a humanitarian argument.] And they must be relieved from the intolerable dilemma of choosing between food and Nazism on the one hand, or starvation and democracy on the other." That is a fair and important point. But where is food relief practicable, apart from Greece? A case must be made out for each instance, always remembering that the power to benefit may be as important in war as the power to destroy.

* * *

I have no doubt that "Peterborough," in the *Daily Telegraph*, repeats in all good faith the myth about the Duke of Alba's palace in Madrid. On Tuesday of this week he wrote: "When his palace there was looted in 1936 he lost some priceless treasures, though most of his famous pictures had already been removed." The facts, as many witnesses can testify, are that the palace was taken over as a public museum by the Spanish Republic, and that it was most carefully looked after by a committee headed by José Bergamin, the Catholic writer. I have friends who constantly went to see it, and spoke of the immense enjoyment that the public gained from the Duke's treasures and gardens. The Duke may or may not know the widely publicised poem written by Alberti about the public enjoyment of a glorious place which had hitherto been kept for a few private individuals. Later it was destroyed, not by looters or by the Republicans, but by one of Franco's bombs. Many of its treasures were saved and afterwards exhibited at Valencia.

* * *

"Epstein Champion Dies" was the headline under which one newspaper chose to announce Sickert's death, while two other London dailies thought the news not worth a mention. Yet most critics and collectors of contemporary art consider Sickert the finest painter we have had since Constable. There is no writer for whom anyone could think of claiming a similarly lonely eminence. Sickert never received the O.M., or, indeed, any official honour, unless one counts as an honour the Civil List pension given to relieve the poverty of a man whose smallest paintings, once sold by him for a fiver, were changing hands for hundreds of pounds. Indeed, our democracy does little for the artist, but at least it allows him to paint. If Sickert had remained in Germany, where he was born, he would presumably have been forbidden, as a "decadent," not only to exhibit, but even to work. I went on to look at the latest acquisition of the National Gallery, the portrait by Rembrandt—another artist who died poor. This is a wonderful, profoundly moving portrait of an old woman, whose head moulded by the sculptural thumb of time contrasts with the crisp newness of her ruff. A brilliant light shines on the aged face, and the whole head is magically made massive. A triumph of penetration and realism, the portrait is also a marvel of painting. One looks in vain at the brush-strokes of salmon and khaki—the method remains an enigma.

* * *

A correspondent who was present on the day following Dr. Lang's resignation tells me that some of the clergy attending the Lower House of Convocation had arranged a sixpenny sweepstake (the proceeds for good causes, of course) on the name of Dr. Lang's successor. I gather that the betting was against Dr. Temple, who seems the obvious choice of most people outside the Church, and in favour of Dr. Garbett, the Bishop of Winchester.

* * *

The following is taken from the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, January 12, 1942:

> Horses are useful where cars cannot travel, Norwegian horses in particular, though many other kinds, for instance, Belgian and French, are used. German horses seem different from the foreign ones. Their eyes are wise and kind.

Who says the Germans are unlike the British?

Critic

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to R.A.F., Torquay.

Paste entries on postcard or slip or paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

The more Germans the Russians kill, the more support will be given to the Aid to Russia Fund by right-thinking Christian people.—*Morecambe and Heysham Visitor and Lancaster Advertiser.*

Domesticated gentlewoman (28) with small bitch, seeks to share work and recreation with young officer's wife or similar.—Advt. in *Lady.*

I am not suggesting that every player could become an expert even if he wanted to—and vice versa, but I do suggest that the *average* standard at Contract Bridge is lamentably low. Why? Because we are determined to look upon a game as a game and not—unless professionally concerned—as a job of work.—*The Observer.*

Flight Lieutenant Raikes (Cons., S.E. Essex) declared that, following a speech by the Prime Minister saying we would defend our airfields even if we had only pikes, at several R.A.F. stations pikes were at once ordered.—*Daily Express.*

In the absence of pre-war markets for cocoa in Europe, there should, I imagine, be a surplus of cocoa produced over and above the requirements of the cocoa and chocolate manufacturers in this country. I understand that there is likely to be a bumper crop on the Gold Coast this season, which may be Nature's way of compensating us for our lost supplies from the Far East.—Letter in the *Times.*

THE CRISIS IN THE CHURCH

For the second time in fourteen years an Archbishop of Canterbury has resigned. Until, in 1928, after the House of Commons had, for the second time, thrown out the Prayer Book Revision measure, Randall Davidson laid down his office—the great Erastian defeated by Erastianism—"Once an Archbishop always an Archbishop" was the accepted English rule. Now Dr. Lang has followed the precedent set by his predecessor.

The reasons for his resignation, given last week to the Convocation of Canterbury, are that "when the war is over great tasks of reconstruction must await the Church as well as the State," and that another Lambeth Conference must meet as soon as the war comes to an end. And Dr. Lang feels that the preparations for the reconstruction and the Conference demand the direction of a younger and more vigorous man.

Dr. Lang has many qualities that have fitted him for his high office. He has natural and attractive dignity. He is an eloquent speaker, though his eloquence is more elegant than moving. He is a shrewd judge of men and he possesses a caustic humour, more often displayed during quiet gossips at Lambeth than in the pulpit or on public platforms. He is sympathetic, informed, and conscientious in the performance of a wilderness of varied duties. Of his personal religion it would be an impertinence to say more than that he is a definite High Churchman, a cautious son of the Tractarian Movement.

Caution has indeed been the characteristic of Dr. Lang's Primacy. He has often looked rather longingly. He has rarely leapt. He has been far too much a courtier ever to have been a popular leader. He has not failed to read the signs of the times. In his recent speeches there has been evidence that he realises the changes that are taking place in the world, but he has never been the man to ride the whirlwind and direct the storm. His Liberal sympathies were shown in his support of the India Act in the House of Lords, and his subscription, with the Archbishop of York, Cardinal Hinsley and the Free Church Moderator, to the ten points summarising Christian war aims showed at least a pious hope that the peace will bring an end to want as well as an end to war . . . But the Archbishop has done nothing to implement his good resolutions. He has had no answer to the question "What can we do?" that is being constantly asked by clergy and laity alike.

The mind of a considerable minority in the Church was expressed in the Lower House of Convocation in the resolution declaring the need for direct Christian political action, but it is safe to say that had the resolution been proposed in the Upper House it would not have had the support of the Archbishop. He has stood consistently for safety first, and for the Church, at this world crisis, safety first spells impotency.

I should not deny that the Archbishop's policy has had the approval of the majority of the clergy and of regular and comfortable churchgoers—the good, easy folk who still believe that, when Hitler is destroyed, the old order of prosperity for the few will be recovered. But I assert that, unless the minority mind prevails and the Church, through its accredited ministers, accepts the Malvern findings and uses its still great influence to back the demand for the legislation necessary if those findings are to be anything more than the pious resolutions that religious men love, the Church will cease altogether to count in the national life.

In a pamphlet, *Malvern and After*, published a fortnight ago, Dr. Temple said that the principles that are set forth in it are "offered as a guide and call to Christian revolution." The "call" is for equality of opportunity for all children—education and vocational training till years of maturity, with freedom from underfeeding, overcrowding, dirty and drab surroundings and mechanical monotony of environment. The "call," too, is for an adequate and secure income for every citizen, with sufficient leisure and "the satisfaction of knowing that his labour is directed for the well-being of the community." There is strong condemnation of the profit motive in industry, which "can sometimes exploit the baser side of human nature and degrade it to an even lower level." Socialisation of certain industries is advocated and, as regards land, it is affirmed that "absentee ownership and non-serviceable ownership are contrary to a morally sound system."

The importance of this pamphlet is that it is a clear, if cautiously worded, indictment of the capitalist system because it is immoral and contrary to the mind and the will of God.

If Dr. Temple can carry the Church with him—I have learned during the past six months how considerable, if bewildered, his following is—then the Church must make it its business to agitate for those radical changes that will kill the degrading profit motive and enable every man to work in decency, comfort and security for the common good.

Dr. Temple has gone very far. He will be compelled to go farther. Certainly his abundant courage and stout conviction will never allow him to go back. And the question now is whether he is to have the additional influence and prestige which would come to him from the translation from York to Canterbury, which will, it is generally anticipated, be offered him. No one will deny that in capacity, character and popularity, Dr. Temple is pre-eminent among his episcopal brethren. He is, indeed, the one contemporary religious leader who is a national figure. He is young for his years. He is patient, conciliatory and, at the same time, determined.

I have not the smallest idea who advises Mr. Churchill in ecclesiastical matters—it is part of the price of establishment that the War Prime Minister should appoint the representative of the Prince of Peace—but it is certain that there will be strong opposition to Dr. Temple's appointment as Dr. Lang's successor from the hide-bound Tories in Parliament, in the Convocations, and in the House of Laity. It may be, too, that Dr. Temple may feel that the great task to which he has set himself would be made impossible by the almost innumerable spiritual and secular duties of the Primacy. The Archbishop of Canterbury is ridiculously overworked, and much of his work is serving tables. This makes strong leadership and the initiation of policy immensely difficult.

The Church, indeed, would gain immensely in moral influence if it were disestablished and the bishops were relieved from attendance in the House of Lords; and disestablishment would make far easier the closer co-operation with the Free Churches which is obviously necessary if Christian sentiment is to play its full part in the shaping of the new world. Disestablishment is impossible while the war lasts, but the Church could put its own house in order now. *Malvern and After* declares:

> Members of the Church of England, clergy and laity alike, cannot take part in this work (striving for a new society) unless they are ready to advocate and bring about a complete change in the internal financial position of the Church of England.

The nation needs your
WASTE PAPER
Ring CENtral 1345

The Church wastes its man-power. Last week among the vacancy benefices advertised there was one in the diocese of Oxford, a parish with a population of 131, a stipend of £300, and, as I know, an attendance at church on Sunday of half-a-dozen. In the part of Hampshire where I live there are four parishes with a population of about 1,000 and four full-time priests. Some parish priests are grossly overpaid; most are underpaid with often a huge house to keep up. Bishops (much against their will) still live in palaces. Cathedral dignitaries often do precious little for their comfortable salaries. The whole financial system wants overhauling, and that should be done now.

I believe profoundly that there is a tremendous job waiting for the Church to do. There is no other body that can do the job that it is called on to undertake. I know that there are hundreds of priests conscious of the opportunity and eager to be led in a real fight against the Devil and all his works. I know that Sir Richard Acland is speaking for a legion of the laity. But for the chance to be fully exploited there must be immediate internal reform and inspiring leadership. And in my judgment that leadership can only come from William Temple.

Sidney Dark

IMPAIRMENTS AND EROSIONS

> In the necessities of modern warfare there is at once a great danger and a great opportunity. There is a danger lest under the excuse of organising the nation for defence and security, liberty may be destroyed and the Corporate State introduced. The greater the danger, the greater the opportunity of persuading people to accept all kinds of restrictions.

The quotation is from a speech made in 1937 by Mr. Attlee. We have now been at war for two-and-a-third years, and it seems an appropriate occasion for stocktaking. How much "liberty" has been "destroyed . . . under the excuse of organising the nation for defence and security," and how much of the "Corporate State" has been "introduced"? Also, how much of what has been destroyed and introduced has been *necessary* in the interests of defence and security? That some impairment of democracy, some erosion of liberty is necessary in wartime is matter of general agreement. There are, however, erosions and impairments of different kinds; for example, those that are open and those that are concealed.

The open are well-known and familiar; they include such matters as the continued suppression of the *Daily Worker*, which, in the absence of any defence of an action which, defensible prior to June 22nd, appears indefensible since that date, must be ascribed to pure political spite; the decay of the representative system of election due to the continuance of the Party truce, resulting in the recruitment of an already unrepresentative House of Commons, not by election but by co-option, the 70 (shortly to be 76) co-optees being distinguished, in the mild phrase of the *Manchester Guardian*, only by their almost unanimous readiness to "sink into quiet anonymity"; the refusal to conscientious objectors, contrary to the expressed intentions of the Government, of the freedom not to fight for the freedom for which we are said to be fighting, a refusal for which rather more than

500 of them are suffering imprisonment at the moment; and the suspension of some of the provisions of *Habeas Corpus* by the powers vested in the Home Secretary under Regulation 18b to imprison without trial.

If I do not write of these matters, it is not only because they are familiar subjects of daily discussion, but also because it may be questioned whether it is in them that the most serious impairments and erosions are in practice to be found. In theory no doubt they are highly dangerous; but in practice most of us do, in spite of them, retain a substantial measure of the liberties we enjoyed before the war, and we retain these liberties because in practice the exceptional powers that are vested in the Executive have been used with reasonable moderation.

The greater dangers are, I would suggest, not those which are open, but those which are concealed, the substance, as is so often the case in England, being eaten away while the form is preserved. These dangers may be grouped under three heads—Books, the Press and the B.B.C.

First, books. The concept of democracy is not merely negative; it does not, that is to say, consist merely in the absence of restrictions. It is also positive; it entails the provision of facilities for its own functioning. Of these facilities books are among the most important, for books are the vehicles of ideas. As Dorothy Sayers has well said: "Ideas are not a detachable fringe upon the stuff of civilisation, but the warp upon which it is woven." The Mills, as usual, had the root of this matter in them. Speaking of his father, John Stuart Mill says in his *Autobiography:*

> So complete was my father's reliance on the influence of reason over the minds of mankind, whenever it is allowed to reach them, that he felt as if all would be gained if the whole population were taught to read, if all sorts of opinions were allowed to be addressed to them by word and in writing, and if by means of a suffrage they could nominate a legislature to give effect to the opinions they adopted.

If in the light of the experience of the history of the past 120 years we must regretfully conclude that free access to opinions and ideas by a universally educated public is not *sufficient* to bring about the millennium; it is, nevertheless, a *necessary condition* of democracy. Moreover, we are fighting for ideas and for freedom to communicate them; ideas are the stuff of propaganda; ideas are the most important of our wartime invisible exports and, let me repeat, books are the vehicles of ideas. These obvious considerations were recognised by the Government when it exempted books from the operations of the Purchase Tax. But while the principle is recognised in theory, the application of the principle is denied in practice. It is not much good permitting people freely to read books, if you deprive them of books to read, by depriving their publishers of the raw material of their trade. The situation is vividly illuminated by the able and informed article which Stanley Unwin has contributed to the December number of *Life and Letters.* I quote one pair of figures which throws an alarming light upon the situation. Of the 970 volumes in the Everyman Library, over 500 are already unprocurable. Meanwhile, Simpkin Marshall report "that two out of every three books ordered from them have now to be answered 'binding,' 'printing' or 'out of print.'"

No less surprising than the situation is the ease with which it could be remedied, "70 book printers and bookbinders were responsible for more than 90 per cent. of the book production in Great Britain" before the war. Of these precious 70 some have been called up, others requisitioned by Government Departments. As to paper, Mr. Unwin's article says:

> The present allocation of paper for books represents at most one and a quarter per cent. of the total consumption. A further two thousand tons a quarter, which would still leave the proportion less than one and three-quarters per cent. would suffice for war-time needs, and enable at least a small start to be made on the urgent work of replacing the millions of copies of standard works destroyed by enemy action.

It is difficult to imagine a case in which so many have been deprived of so much by the absence of so little and the withdrawal of so few.

Similar considerations affect the press.

The daily papers to-day are short, dull and alike. They are short because they are restricted as to paper; they are dull because the great bulk of their little space must be given to official news, most of which has already been heard on the wireless; and they are alike because the raw material upon which they must draw is inevitably the same. The effect is that the function of the Press as a vehicle for the expression of opinion, for the criticism of the Government, for the guarding of liberty, the ventilation of grievances, and the checking of the never-ending audacity of elected and appointed persons, is dangerously reduced.

Incidentally the tendency of the papers to print the speeches of the Government spokesmen and not of their critics has engendered the false impression that Parliament is a wholly acquiescent body.

Most of this no doubt falls under the category of unavoidable impairments, but the restriction of the scope of the weeklies is on a different footing. Their circulation is comparatively small; the amount of paper they consume is very small. Yet their nature is such that they cannot be themselves unless they have at their disposal a certain amplitude of space. The writer of the critical commentary upon affairs, the critic and appraiser of books, art and music, the author of the "middle," needs room to turn round in. Thus, while the daily press retains its contracted personality, the journals of opinion are in danger of losing theirs altogether.

All this means that the responsibility of maintaining civilisation is increasingly transferred to the shoulders of the B.B.C. It is to the B.B.C. that we must increasingly look to circulate ideas, to stimulate the minds, to elevate the tastes, to sharpen the critical faculties, to represent the opinions—*and not only the official and majority opinions*—of a people fighting for liberty. To an unprecedented degree the guardianship of our traditions of liberty and culture is now in the hands of the B.B.C.

Is it a good guardian?

The question demands an article to itself, nor is a brief reference to such matters as the refusal of the Gibb broadcast and the perpetual streams of light music—I cite examples of the way in which the B.B.C. does, in fact, fulfil the respective roles of guardian of liberty and torch-holder of culture—a sufficient answer to the question. I have space, however, for one example, which seems to me to involve a lamentable failure on the part of the B.B.C. to live up to its high responsibility. The question whether Rationalist broadcasts, criticising supernatural religion and offering a humanistic interpretation of life, should be permitted in peacetime is, I suppose, an open one. For my part I cannot see why all sides should not be given a hearing, or why the Churches—strong in their faith—should be so afraid of a fair field and no favour. But in times like these, against a background of paper restriction, fewer books and shorter journals, the refusal to allow minorities to obtain publicity for their opinions looks like a betrayal of the cause for which we are fighting. After pointing out that the adherents of the Churches are a minority of the people, that the existence of a State Church does not mean a coherent and agreed set of beliefs, that the Churches themselves are constantly lamenting the indifference of the bulk of the people to every type of Christian doctrine, and that there are no signs of a predominant and uniform demand for religious broadcasts, Surgeon Rear-Admiral Beadnell, the President of the Rationalist Press Association, in an admirable letter to the Director of the B.B.C., continues as follows:

> Freedom of speech and expression is among the objects for which we and our allies are fighting, and nowhere is that freedom more vigorously demanded than in the sphere of religious thought. To deny such freedom to a minority is as indefensible as to withhold it from a majority; yet the B.B.C. uses its monopoly powers to confine speech and expression in one particular direction. On the one hand the B.B.C. condemns the propaganda methods of totalitarian countries, where the State-controlled radio allows only the official point of view to be heard; on the other hand it applies precisely the same methods in its propaganda for Christianity. On the one hand the B.B.C. extols the democratic principle that the people should hear all sides of a case and be encouraged to form their own judgment; on the other hand it refuses to allow the millions it serves to hear more than one side of the case on a vital issue.

Here, it seems to me, is a test case, by reference to which we may judge how many of the concepts of liberty and democracy we retain; how many of those of the Corporate State we are by implication introducing. C. E. M. JOAD

IRRELEVANT

It was pleasant on Sunday to read some news about the weather. After a considerable interval we were allowed to know how cold we had been. Day after day, it is true, we were told what sort of weather they were having over the Straits of Dover—sleet, mist, north-east wind, and so forth. But what we were not allowed to know was what the sky was doing over such places as Betchworth, Bermondsey, Buxton and Bradford. On the whole, perhaps, this was a good thing. If we had known how cold it was, we should probably have felt colder. As it was, we who do not possess thermometers or barometers merely knew in a vague way that it was snowing or freezing or chilling to the bone, just as it should be in a typical winter. That was bad enough, but how much more miserable we should have felt if we had known that up to the 19th of the month the temperature was 15 degrees lower than the average for the period!

I confess that I suspected it was colder than usual when I found myself voluntarily putting on gloves one morning. Gloves, of course, do not keep the hands warm except in a moderate temperature, and on a really cold day one has ultimately to take them off in order that one's fingers may recover their circulation; but, first thing in the morning, they look as if they might keep one's hands warm. They are a temporary aid to wishful thinking during a cold spell. Foreigners wear them in railway trains during heat-waves to keep their hands clean—a much more efficient use to which to put them. One day, however, I not only put on gloves, but was persuaded to wrap a muffler—got from I do not know where—round my neck. That convinced me that it must be very cold indeed, but even then I did not realise how bitterly cold it was—how many terrifying degrees below freezing-point.

Going into the refreshment-room at a railway station, I saw a tall man standing at the bar with a glass of beer before him and a newspaper in his hand. He chuckled between gulps and turned to me and read out passages from a wireless talk by a Russian propagandist to the Germans. "That's good," he said. A little man, his face wrinkled with cheerfulness, came in and stamped his feet on the floor as he said "Hilloa!" to the tall one. "What are you drinking?" he asked. "Beer," said the tall one. "Have another," said the little man. "No," said the tall one, shuddering his cheeks; "it's too cold." "Cold?" exclaimed the little man; "What does that matter? You've got your spats on." And he laughed delightedly at a *non sequitur* which, I felt, could have been inspired only by the biting wind outside. "What are you up to to-day?" he went on, with equal irrelevance. "I always know you're up to some dirty work when you're wearing spats."

After this I went to a restaurant, and had just sat down to lunch when a waitress came up with a basket of rolls and, holding it out to me, said: "Will you take a cauliflower?" Then, shaking her head with a blush, she said: "What am I doing? I mean, will you take a roll?" That, to me, was a unique experience, and I put the girl's confusion between cauliflower and a roll down to the unique coldness of the weather. The brain goes numb—and remains numb till well after lunch—when the thermometer sinks 15 or more degrees below freezing point.

Later in the day life becomes more normal. The day's work done, I went into an inn where two married couples were, to their great enjoyment, exchanging experiences of being bombed in London. One of the women described how a bomb fell in her street and shook the house so that she was tossed backwards and forwards in her chair. "Just like this," she said; and she gave a vivid imitation of her involuntary movements. "It was like sitting in a rocking-chair," she said. "Oh, dear! sometimes you can't help laughing." No doubt, thirty years hence survivors will be telling of such things with even more gusto, and will be listened to as bores by some, but with envy by others, of the peace-world young.

When the married couples had gone, a young sailor came in with a woman older than himself, and, for some reason or other, we were soon all talking about horses. The woman said that horses were such beautiful animals, and I agreed with her. She then said that dogs were beautiful animals, and I agreed with her again, though this time with some mental reservations. After we had discussed dogs for some time, she launched into praise of cats, and said she always thought that a house looked lonely without a cat. "I don't like cats," said the sailor, "not since a cat killed my canaries. But I've got a bird," he added with a grim nod, "that's a match for any cat. I'd like to see a cat putting his paw into my parrot's cage. He'd soon get as fine a nip as ever he got in his life. That's a rare bird, my parrot. He's been through something. He was through the blitz in London." And he added curiously: "He was the only one of the family that survived it."

"He was living," he went on, "with my father and mother and my wife in Bermondsey when the house got a direct hit—blown clean away and everybody in the house killed—not a chance of escape." I murmured my sympathy. "Yes," he said, showing as little emotion as possible, "my wife and mum and dad all dead. That was a nice thing to come home to after two years at sea." He paused for a moment or two and then went on: "Two days afterwards a policeman was passing where the house had been, when he heard a voice from under the debris calling out: 'Will nobody bring me a drink?' 'That's funny,' he says to himself; 'somebody must be alive down there after all.' And he called for help, and they dug and dug, and in the end what did they find but the old parrot, alive and perky in his cage, though the cage was lying sideways? And when they rescued him, he looks at them, just as if nothing had happened, and says to them again: 'Will nobody bring me a drink?'

"Oh, he's a rare bird, that parrot. I wouldn't part with him—not for a fortune. And what a heart he has! He thinks no more of air raids now than if somebody was to knock at the door. He's been through a lot of raids, and if he hears a bomb bursting, all he does is to cock his head on one side and say: 'What's that?' He seems to know what's going on all right, but he's not afraid. He just cocks his head and says: 'What's that?' You can't help being fond of a bird like that. He's about all I've left now."

I have suggested that talk grows more normal towards the evening in winter; but I doubt whether the talk can ever be called normal except among those who speak in the latest fashionable slang. Talk is usually full of surprises. Even in this so-called mechanised age human beings remain inveterately original. So, at least, I reflected when I read this week of the death of Lord Ashbourne and recalled various occasions on which I met him striding about in his Irish saffron kilt. I do not remember much of what he said, for a good deal of it was in the Irish language, in which he was more advanced than I; but I recall meeting him one day, during the last war, on the road outside Holmwood, and his buttonholing me to expound his theory of the inner meaning of the war. "This," he said—for he loved philology—"is a war between the C and the K. All the countries that spell Caesar with a C are on one side—the English with Caesar, the French with César, the Italians with Cesare, and the Russians with Czar—while all the countries that spell Caesar with a K, like the Germans and the Austrians with their Kaiser, are on the other." I had not the presence of mind to ask him whether the Turks and the Bulgarians also spelt Caesar with a K, and, even if I had thought of doing so, I should not have liked to do anything to damp his enthusiasm for his new-found theory.

Not everybody, of course, is so original as Lord Ashbourne, but nearly everybody has some original experience to impart if it is only the sight of a mole attacking a frog or of a rabbit climbing up wire-netting. To listen to human beings and to watch birds are perhaps two of the most endlessly interesting occupations. When the weather turns bitterly cold, watching birds is out of the question for most of us, but it is still possible to listen to human beings and to marvel at the strange things they impart. Y.Y.

NO COMPLACENCY

Though, after moments of suspense,
Responsive to the master touch,
The Commons vote that confidence
Of which they cannot show too much,
Though Ministers grow mightier yet,
Safeguarded for all time to be,
Though Britain save her Cabinet,
There must be no complacency.

And though in Libya's desert waste
Our armoured thrust in circles wheels,
Our vanguard pressing on in haste,
The foe retreating on our heels.
Though neither sandstorms, dust nor rain
Obscure our twice-won victory,
On Cyrenaica's campaign
There must be no complacency.

Though Britain's property out East,
Where so much capital was spent,
Is rescued from scorched earth at least,
And safe for post-war settlement.
Though with the Japanese defeat,
Instead of valueless *débris*
Our goods will be restored complete,
There must be no complacency.

Though in the arms production race,
With battle raging at its height,
We fashion at majestic pace
A full two-thirds of what we might.
Though trials must therefore be severe,
Until in 1943
We may have grounds for sober cheer,
There must be no complacency.

SAGITTARIUS

THE MOVIES

"Blood and Sand," at the Odeon.
"Hoppity Goes to Town," at the Carlton.
"In the Rear of the Enemy," at the Tatler.

I believe that I saw the first *Blood and Sand*, with Valentino in his heyday, but it was long ago, and thank goodness I have forgotten. Those who remember and compare such things seem to me miserably gifted; what a burden amusement must be for the film critic who can't forget! Not for him the delight of pictures going in at one eye and out of the other; everything sticks; and a leopard-skinned seat at the Odeon this week will be cloying with memories. But I have managed to forget *Blood and Sand* once, and hope to do so again. Ibanez's tripe masterpiece came to me fresh as a daisy, or, rather, rich as a carnation. If ever a story demanded technicolour this one does; sunlight and moonlight, the glare of the arena, shady chapels, flowers, dancing to the guitar, the matador's finery, even the black bull—one can't imagine them now in monochrome. Mamoulian has made a good showy job of it. "It is as though" (to quote a discriminating fellow-critic) "Rembrandt had gone to Hollywood"; as though, shall we say, Giotto had taken to decorating cigar-boxes. Actually, on a technicolour level, *Blood and Sand* is pretty good, and Mamoulian brings off a popular success that has hints of a better film. There is real drama in the boy playing his first bull by moonlight, in Nazimova as a mother whose husband and son are killed in the ring, in the mixture of sex, sport and religion, in the court-scenes of the matador's dressing-room, in the talk and intoxication, the largesse of meat that follow a *corrida*: these pierce through the conventional "drama" of the novel, and the actual scenes of bull-fighting are thrilling and vivid to the eye. And does Tyrone Power, as "the first man in all the world," cut a more striking figure than Rudolph Valentino? Don't know and don't care; but I rather fancy he has less *allure*.

Hoppity Goes to Town is a full-length cartoon with insect characters. (Why, I wonder, has no cartoonist explored this fascinating world before?) Fleischer isn't Disney, but there are moments when he comes into his own with touches of the vernacular. His bullying beetle, his fly and mosquito jaunting along a pavement crack in the moonlight, hit something original in human caricature more akin to Grandville than Disney. The best moments are calamitous: when a spade overturns whole households or a grasshopper makes its way across a New York street. *Hoppity* fills a crude and lively hour, but, on the whole, its insect life disappoints, and the way is still open to Disney.

In the Rear of the Enemy is another of those reconstructed incidents with which the Russians supplement their news-reels of the war. The level of realism is somewhere between the war scenes of *Sergeant Yorke* and documentaries such as *Shors*, with rather more in common with the first; but though slow-moving and at times artificially tense, *In the Rear of the Enemy* gives an effective picture of winter fighting in the

North—white-clad soldiers on skis, artillery drawn by horse, no tanks, no aeroplanes, observation posts hidden under snow, telephone wires leading through the enemy. The English version has been directed by Herbert Marshall.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

PLAYS AND PICTURES

Holborn Civil Defence Art Group at 101, High Holborn

Holborn is the home of this journal, and local patriotism gives special warmth to our welcome to this exhibition. The works of Fire Watchers, we are glad to notice, are eligible. The show is a mixture, like those of the Civil Defence artists at the Cooling Gallery, of professional and amateur work. There are delightful works by Le Bas and Vera Cunningham, etchings by C. W. R. Nevinson, drawings full of character by George Collett, an etching by Mr. F. A. *Nineteenth Century* Voigt, and pleasingly personal works by C. Firestone, B. Howitt Lodge and Nathan Rosenberg.

Correspondence

N.S. & N. IN BRAILLE

[It is with great pleasure that we print the letter below commenting on the first Braille issue of this journal. It was transcribed last week at the Northern branch of the National Library for the Blind. We are informed that this is the first time a critical review has been placed regularly at the disposal of Braille readers; that there is a large demand for this journal among them and that efforts are being made to make a larger number of copies available.—ED., *N.S. & N.*]

SIR,—I have just read, with great interest, the first copy of *The New Statesman and Nation* which by your courtesy has been put into Braille by the National Library for the Blind. May I express my thanks and appreciation to you and to the publishers for allowing the Braille copy to be made, as it fills a very important need amongst Braille readers for well-informed and critical comment particularly in these times.

I am not clear as to how much of the original one transcribes into Braille, but the articles which were transcribed were extremely useful.

The paragraph in "A London Diary" relating to the neglect by the B.B.C. of Indian affairs is particularly illustrative of the usefulness of a paper such as yours to a blind man. When one is a busy professional man, as I am, it is extremely difficult to find time to have the newspaper read regularly and in detail, consequently one has to rely for day-to-day information very largely on the B.B.C. Unfortunately India is not the only subject or country which is disregarded by the Corporation. Very little is heard about Chinese or Russian opinion, and the latter particularly will obviously be of vital importance to us in the coming months. In fact, in a war which has created all kinds of controversies, of which, a free discussion is so essential, and which war one still hopes is being fought to preserve the right and the inclination to enter into such discussion, the B.B.C. has unfortunately shunned everything of a controversial nature, no doubt for fear of antagonising those whose interest lies in the restoration of pre-war conditions as soon as possible. The point is further illustrated by the reference in your paper to the proposal to record for broadcasting the Prime Minister's statement to the House of Commons. As soon as it was suggested that speeches critical of the Government should be recorded, the proposal to record the Prime Minister was dropped like a hot potato. The suggestion was, however, extremely practicable. The debate is to last three days, and it would have been reasonable to broadcast the Prime Minister on the first day, selections of representative critical comment on the second, and the Government rejoinder on the third.

I have mentioned the foregoing matters to illustrate how your paper filled as it is on every page, with pungent comment on the very latest matters, is a weekly refreshment to those who are in so large a measure dependent upon an official organ of opinon such as the B.B.C. Of course, one reads much in your paper with which one cannot agree, but that is its chief commendation.

I am told that next week more of your articles will be transcribed into Braille, and I am looking forward to the next and subsequent issues with keen interest. May I express my thanks once again, and I am sure that I shall be doing right in adding those of the other Braille readers who are benefiting.

28, Manor Avenue,
Fulwood, Preston.

G. MILLER

PLANNING

SIR,—As Miss Elizabeth Denby quotes a statement made by me in her article "Pluto and Persephone," perhaps you will allow me to say a word in defence of territorial planning, against the anarchism of which she is so persistent an exponent. Miss Denby is entitled to be an anarchist if she pleases. She is not entitled to assume that the conditions which determined the location of industry in the nineteenth century still obtain to-day. Nor is she entitled to call that assumption "realism."

The theme of the article is that the concentration of the population in the hideous industrial centres which disfigure this country is not fortuitous, but based on the unchangeable need of industry to be situated in the immediate vicinity of coal and iron. The only exception is London, whose growth is admitted to be "indefensibly artificial," but is left otherwise unexplained. Miss Denby completely ignores the essential fact that electrical power, on which an increasingly large proportion of manufacture is now dependent, has introduced a new mobility into industry which makes her "facts" look like mere fiction. Native iron ore has also for long been of declining importance, and industry in peacetime has been turning increasingly to imported metals, aluminium, and the lighter materials. Moreover, some of the most modern steelworks are situated a considerable distance away from the coalfields.

Miss Denby is opposed to control over the location of industry, not merely in the interests of Pluto, but of Pluto-Democracy. "The population of Britain is not an army of occupation," she declares, "without ties and traditions, preferences and prejudices, to be moved "like robots about the land of Britain." Thus we are to believe that the textile workers of to-day have selected Lancashire by their free choice as the particular spot above all others where they wish to live and work; that the decision of the Ford Company to move from Trafford Park to Dagenham was the result of a free vote of the employees.

The truth of the matter is that the location of industry is largely arbitrary under free enterprise. The entrepreneur may think of his costs of production; he may think (as Lord Nuffield no doubt did) that his home town is a good enough place in which to start a factory; but the whole process of decision is haphazard and without reference to the complex of factors which planners would take into consideration in controlling the location of industry. What the planning movement is aiming at is not a "neutral uniformity" between the various types of towns, but the attainment of economic, social and aesthetic conditions likely to offer the mass of the people the opportunity of a good life. If Miss Denby likes what she calls the "strange grandeur" of Newcastle or Pittsburgh, one cannot argue with her: it is a matter of values.

But let us be under no misapprehension concerning her attitude. Control over the location of industry is the key to town and country planning. No evocation of ancient mythology or the haunting charm of magic names can disguise the fact that Miss Denby's views on this subject are identical with those of the Federation of British Industries, the Ministry of Health and various other reactionary bodies and persons who are opposed to the principles on which any genuine planned reconstruction of Britain after the war must be based. The amazing migration of industry and population which has occurred in consequence of the war would almost suffice by itself to refute Miss Denby's main argument: but of that one cannot write on grounds of security.

WILLIAM A. ROBSON

BOTTOM OF THE WELL

SIR,—Truth's well is deep, and also unexpectedly crooked; but though there usually seems to be a certain amount of mud at the bottom, I agree with Mr. Fielden that you need to be assured of your truth before you sling it.

But when he blames Whitehall for the indefensibility of Malaya, does he not underestimate the dependence of the London bureaucrat on information supplied by resident officials "on the spot"? You cannot tell what arms are needed for the detailed defence of a place thousands of miles away, with an eccentric climate and a heterogenous population: you depend on the word of the man whose business it is to go and see. Does Mr. Fielden's bucket of truth hold evidence that from 1935 or so (when we began spending millions on Singapore) the men on the spot have been continually clamouring for arms which Whitehall now explains away to Libya and Russia?

Is it not a more reasonable explanation to suppose that the Chamberlain era of business-principles and appeasement, from which England has still not freed itself, has remained totally unshaken in the Far East: that the men on the spot have seen in Japan the "civilised" and "progressive" country, and sung in tune with the craven chorus of international-legal *simony* which began with the Baldwin government's defence of the Manchurian affair in 1932? Once committed to that line we were bound to regard Japan as a bulwark of Big Business and against Bolshevism; bound to accept her mythical mission of "pacification"; bound to feed her oil and samples of our new models in tanks (one of each, to copy); and bound, therefore, to be unprepared to see her as an inevitable and dangerous enemy.

Mr. Fielden's knowledge of Whitehall and experience of the East are far greater than mine, but this is how four years abroad makes the thing appear to me, in my muddy bucket. Step by step and stage by stage, from Manchuria to the Yangtse valley, then to Peiping, and then south to Canton, Fukien, and Kwangsi, the Tanaka Plan has been put into operation; and at every stage the curse of Baldwin-Simon-Chamberlain has numbed us into the belief that the latest stage was the last, till now the circle spreads to Burma, the Indies, Australia. Why? Surely not because of any one local nincompoop, nor even a nest of ninnies in Whitehall; but because the most dangerous Fifth Column is of men who will fight inefficiently to the death against the *recognised* enemy they have already and unwittingly let in because in their principles and their profitable hearts they have been with him all the time.

Abusive Peers might remember the words of two anonymous Lords in *All's Well that Ends Well*. The first remark, "As we are ourselves, what things we are!"; the second replies, "Merely our own traitors."

Hatfield Gatehouse,
Durham.

A. P. ROSSITER

SIR,—I see that your contributor, Mr. Lionel Fielden, in his defence of Brooke-Popham, has flicked off an easy sneer at me as one who extols "bad manners as good strategy." I will leave the niceties of deportment to Mr. Fielden who can probably be trusted to exercise his charm towards a more graceful kind of war that apparently includes handsome apologies to ineffective Air Marshals.

Mr. Fielden defends Brooke-Popham.

I attacked him because he is a party to a ridiculous bluff that couldn't hope to succeed. The trouble with the Brooke-Pophams is their misplaced loyalties. They'll never blow the gaff. They are true to their caste. They won't risk all to expose a danger so big that it threatens to smash half our Empire. They play the bureaucratic game. If Brooke-Popham had exposed the Malayan scandal, he would at least have nailed the responsibility fairly and squarely on the guilty ones of Whitehall—and one rotten branch could have been lopped off. As it is, the system remains intact.

Somebody had the guts to expose the shell scandal of the last war—is it too much to expect the same measure of courage in this war where the stakes are immensely higher?

As for Mr. Fielden's claim that "the Government by its growing monopoly of advertising matter has more and more control over the press," he is talking rubbish. If he understood the first thing about newspaper economics he would know that not for twenty years has the press been so independent of advertisement revenue. Mr. Fielden should concentrate on facts as well as manners.

WILLIAM N. CONNOR
(" Cassandra.")

THE BRITISH TRUST

SIR,—Eminent people and members of the Bledisloe Commission have uttered a warning against any hasty amalgamation of Nyasaland with Southern Rhodesia, on the grounds of the principles involved in the institution of the Protectorate here. I merely speak from the Native point of view.

There is scarcely anyone in Nyasaland who desires amalgamation with Southern Rhodesia. We are wondering why Southern Rhodesia suddenly takes this interest in Nyasaland. What is the motive?

In every way, geographically and climatically, the Zambesi is the dividing line between South Africa and Central Africa.

If Southern Rhodesia desires incorporation with a larger district and government, why do they not unite with the Union of South Africa? They do not wish to, perhaps. Neither do we wish to be united with Southern Rhodesia. What is their motive? Is not their attitude to our yet uncivilised natives, on the whole, that of a capitalistic community towards Labour, which they wish for on their own terms? But that is where the Home Government of Britain is pledged to protect the Africans. They cannot fairly abandon the trust.

I have a right to speak for the Africans as I have worked on the shores of Lake Nyasa for 48 years.

The Government, ever since Sir Harry Johnston, has been an admirable one, of which Great Britain may be proud. The District Commissioners, appointed by the Home Government, and not locally, have really looked after the welfare of the Africans and they cannot speak.

We appeal to the Home Government not to abandon their trust. So well have the Natives been protected and guided that, like a child under a good nurse, they do not realise what they have to be protected from. That is why Mr. Fitzgerald was able to remark that they had not yet made a very definite expression of opinion. If they *did* realise what amalgamation would mean they would rise as one man to protest against our being handed over to a capitalistic community whose Native Policy is so different to ours.

Why does the Honourable, the Prime Minister of Southern Rhodesia speak scornfully of the opinion of the Home Government? I thought that, if you wish to acquire a sheep owned by your neighbour, it was only right to respect his opinion as to the ownership thereof.

I would appeal to all true Labour Members to oppose the grabbing policy of Southern Rhodesia in wishing to amalgamate Nyasaland and Southern Rhodesia.

Nyasaland. A. G. B. GLOSSOP

REVENGE

SIR,—*Re* Michael R. C. Laurie's letter in your January 24th issue concerning my poem " France " in your January 17th number—his complaint that despite (maybe) poetic licence there is too much hate altogether in the poem, for " it reads like an uncontrolled orgy of hatred calculated to arouse all the very qualities which will effectively sabotage any attempt, now or later, to attain a just, calm and reasonable reconstruction in the new world . . . " is, first and foremost, a complete confusion of subjects of issues. Mr. Laurie appears to assume that I am writing of *the future*, while he is thinking of what *ought to be*. I am not. I write in this poem of TO-DAY *in* France. To-day is composed of executions, wholesale robbery, persecutions, repressions by the Germans, of hunger and misery, and also of vengeances, such as assassinations and sabotage—of resistance to the invader by the French. Everywhere (save amongst the possible 10 per cent. who favour Vichy) is hatred—logically enough.

This letter I am answering strikes me as written by someone divorced from reality; in any case by a partisan of that dummy called " Appeasement." Dummy it is, as has been clearly shown all along. But there are realistic enough strings which work that dummy. In France we would call such a person " an embusqué "—a hidden or camouflaged one.

The French are great realists and it is not likely when peace shall have come that they will forget the millions of lost and orphaned children, the dead, the thirty towns and I do not know how many villages and regions destroyed, the executions of hostages, the robbery of products, the appalling betrayal by their own Fascists (doubtless planned ever since their putsch failed in Paris in February, 1934), the flaunting, then abolition, of constitutional law and procedure—the entire tragedy of their country. But the French have also high Republican ideals and traditions. Although there will be hatred in France there will be a great deal else, too. And if the kind of end comes to the war which all progressive, truly democratically minded people in the entire world must hope for, then yes, the Great Transformation will come in France itself—and maybe without a Revolution (that depends on the circumstances of the end of the war)—and the real rebuilding Mr. Laurie mentions will take place. I agree with his last words: " We must never again take, as we have hitherto taken, the comfortable, easy, complacent line of least resistance." Perhaps Great Britain will not be in a position to do so, or rather, that the Munichite appeasers will have been put out of the national picture by then.

Hate is an emotion, a very real force, in this case evoked by *events*. I wrote of that. I wrote of what I know perhaps better than anything else: of France. Frenchmen will be able to participate in the " new world brotherhood " (providing we get it). But that will never come from " appeasement." It will come only from an end of Fascism, of their own traitors, and of the men of Vichy and their partisans in other countries.

NANCY CUNARD

CONTROL OF COSMETICS

SIR,—As a former retail pharmacist, now working in a hospital, I was interested by Mr. Redgrove's letter complaining of the incidence of the Order restricting the manufacture of toilet preparations.

It is not clear from Mr. Redgrove's letter whether he disagrees with the principle of restriction of toilet articles or whether he disagrees with the particular way in which it has been attempted.

If it is with this latter point that Mr. Redgrove is concerned, then it is not enough for him to suggest that the officials responsible for the Order are " not far short of lunacy "; until Mr. Redgrove tells us how he would effect this restriction of luxury articles, we are not entitled to think that he could do any better.

If, however, he thinks that the manufacture of toilet articles should not be restricted, then I must disagree with him. Mr. Redgrove, by means of his technical qualifications, must know that nearly all toilet preparations contain raw ingredients which are valuable as medicinal agents or essential to certain war industries. The liquid paraffin which forms the base of many hair creams would be very welcome to many hospitals where this article is scarce and is severely rationed. I could give many other instances of substances which are badly needed medically and which are ingredients of toilet preparations.

Finally, Mr. Redgrove may be disturbed by the severity of the penalties to which transgressors of the Order render themselves liable. In my view such penalties may sometimes be justified. There is a black market in cosmetics as well as in food.

5, Haymeads Lane,
Bishops Stortford.

JOHN C. H. HANSON
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BOOKS IN GENERAL

A GOOD deal of our culture as well as our capital is locked up in the Far East. Looking at those investments again, one fingers the scrip with the last-minute love of a nervous shareholder. They have acquired an unreasonable personal value, even though the bottom may have fallen out of the market. Stevenson, Conrad, Maugham—they will all have to be read before invasion knocks the meaning out of their background. Literature has followed the flag. What sort of literature? The answer is—hopelessly romantic literature, i.e., romantic literature without hope; and this includes Maugham's precise pictures of adultery and alcoholism in Malaya. Maugham comes into his own to-day. Every jibe he ever made, whether justly or not, about the "tuans" has become only too distressingly topical, and Singapore has written in the last two or three weeks a Maugham story such as Maugham himself might have flinched from writing.

What about Conrad? I have been reading some of the Malayan novels again, after a lapse of 20 years—books like *Almayer's Folly, The Outcast of the Island, The Rescue, Lord Jim* and shorter pieces like *Youth, The Secret Sharer* and *Freya of the Seven Isles.* What struck me was how vague and even falsified these books were in my memory. The atmosphere one remembered, of course. But even stories like Almayer's were muddled in my mind like the memory of a dream. They are dreams, these books. Their colour, their unreal major characters, their insectile minor ones, their tortuous action, live in the compulsive twilight of a hypnotic dream, a dream that slows down to the intense heat of nightmare. Here and there the temperature becomes colder and, as in the yacht episode of *The Rescue,* you touch that *Tatler*-like actuality of the Maugham subject; but it is only for a moment. The half-light comes down, the shadow and the sun-shot fog of Conrad's ruminations cloud the obvious issue, and the dream thickens in the head. Afterwards it will be difficult to say once more what *was* the issue Conrad had in his tentative, evasive, suspicious and rather exasperated imagination.

This is not true of Conrad's best work. *Youth,* for example, is one of those stories where elaboration did not get to work. It is a story of sunrise and not sunset in the East; and I think all his best work is what may be called his straightforward daytime manner. *Youth* has little of the famous Conrad atmosphere and mystification. It is not written in sackcloth and ashes. In *Youth* one is led only to the frontiers of that fog which possesses so many of the writings whole. (I put *The Secret Sharer, The Nigger of the Narcissus* and *Typhoon* in the *Youth* class). That *Youth* leads you to the edge and does not engulf you is, of course, Conrad's intention. This is a story of travel, not of arrival. The capture of a first marvelling glance of the longed-for East, the song of an unexploded delusion is all its object. The wrecked sailors have arrived exhausted at Bangkok:

> Further out old Mahon's face was upturned to the sky, with the long white beard spread out on his breast, as though he had been shot where he sat at the tiller; and a man, all in a heap in the bows of the boat, slept with both arms embracing the stem-head and with his cheek laid on the gunwhale. The East looked at them without a sound.
>
> I have known its fascination since [Conrad never knew when to stop, but as the next passage foreshadows the rest of his Malayan work, it needs to be quoted]. I have seen the mysterious shores, the still water, the lands of brown nations, where a stealthy Nemesis lies in wait, pursues, overtakes so many of the conquering race, who are proud of their wisdom, of their knowledge, of their strength. But for me all the East is contained in that vision of my youth. It is all in that moment when I opened my young eyes on it.

Destiny, Nemesis, those dirty inquisitorial familiars who turn up on the deck making their hierophantic gestures behind the backs of Conrad's simple Devonshire sailors or half-cracked traders in the jungle of the archipelago, merely get on to the last page of *Youth.* I often wish it could have been the same in books like the *Outcast* or *The Rescue.* For though Destiny is a laconic conception, it is one which encourages wordiness in novelists; and the reader of Conrad feels a baffled irritation, as if he were a commercial traveller getting heavy admonitions every morning from an egregious head office. One ought not to feel like this, and I am convinced that one would not do so in Conrad if one felt that Conrad's Destiny was endowed with the sublime faculty for being inevitable. Conrad's Destiny seems to be an idea poisoned by exile, dwarfed by a bad temper and embittered by a failure to meet great men worth destroying. To characters like Willems, in *The Outcast,* or Almayer, Destiny can only be nasty, as the police are nasty to tramps.

The valuable side of Conrad's conception of Destiny is that it is really an interesting historical sense which the Slavonic imagination has made theatrical. In all the Malayan books, as I read them now, the meat is in this sense of history. Conrad seems to have turned the Polish exile's natural preoccupation with nationality, history, defeat and unavailing struggle, from his own country to these Eastern islands. The natives are a defeated people. They remember massacre. They live under the Dutch and English overlords, swindled by the Arab traders, with eyes and hearts in the past. They turn, as the conquered must, to intrigue, which is relieved on rare occasions by sudden ecstatic, despairing loyalties. They turn from corruption to nostalgia for the sublime virtues. Babalatchi, the one-eyed scoundrel, diplomat and philosopher who wrecks the Outcast, and shakes but does not break the fortunes of Lingard, is one aspect of the temperament of the defeated; Hasim, its aspect of fierce hope, poetic loyalty and timeless experience of evil. It has been said that Conrad does not draw the Malay as he really is, and that his Malays are idealisations. They may well be. A host of his characters are frank idealisations. They represent consciously Conrad's reading of the bloody history of the islands, and of the historical situation at the time he was writing. And knowing the situation, he knows the intrigue—how it is something which goes far deeper than human idiosyncrasy and private jealousy or ambition, but is the ferment of a defeated society itself. Conrad's gift for handling intrigue in his novels is at its best when it has real intrigue to work on—such as can be seen in *Almayer, The Outcast* or even in the stodgier *Rescue*—it is when this Doge-like passion of his is turned from society to psychology, to a man's intrigue with himself, as in *Lord Jim,* that he is, to my present eye, less successful.

I say "less" and then hesitate. As Conrad exhausted his early material, his imagination naturally turned to improvisation. He who had been, in the sense of my earlier use of the word, an historical novelist, now became a prophetic one. What is a prophetic novelist? He is hard to define, but I should say he is one to whom human beings are timeless; they are souls and not persons, and good and evil and fate fight for their possession. This element had always been in Conrad's work and gave his realism the distorting stamp of a spiritual insight. But, on the whole, in England we reject the prophets; it is so obvious that they are disappointed men. We find this in D. H. Lawrence, whose affinity with Conrad is very close. Lawrence is angry about sex; Conrad is angry about honour. They are both inordinately conscious of failure, the one of the failures of sex, the other of the failures of loyalty. An undertone of guilt runs through their writing. But when we consider Lawrence's diatribes about sexual failure we answer that there are a lot of other things to do; and when we consider Lord Jim, running away from job after job, on the waterfront, because of his treachery to himself, or Tom Lingard confused by the crassness of human nature, we feel that human nature has quite enough on its hands without crying because it isn't perfect. The soul may be marred by the evils it commits, but is far more commonly marred by the failure to admit that it has committed evil. Conrad's problems are esoteric. Lord Jim was not a good man gone wrong, but a compulsive neurotic as much as the Outcast is. The charge of morbidity originally brought against Conrad must be sustained; his morbidity was in fact the irritant which created the Conrad fog.

The excellences of Conrad do not lie, in my opinion, in that dubious Romantic over-world, but in his real observation, in his feeling for real life. In the big elaborated books he is always avoiding his climaxes, and on principle—when he doesn't, you get the impossible dialogue between Lingard and Aissa at the crisis of *The Outcast*—in the daylit stuff he is never worried by these dramatic clashes. They are mixed in with the stream of life: the captain going into his bathroom in *The Secret Sharer*; the "old man" admitting the existence of the fire in *Youth.* The normal portraiture is astonishing. Conrad's eye for the soul, before the soul ran away with him, is tremendous. Here is the first glance at a City man; not Conrad's beat at all, but how exact he is:

> His clear pale face had under its commonplace refinement that slight tinge of overbearing brutality which is given by the possession of only partly difficult accomplishments; by excelling in games, or in the art of making money; by the easy mastery over animals and over needy men.

Or the portrait of the "old man" in *Youth*:

> He was 60 if a day; a little man, with a broad, not very straight back, with bowed shoulders and one leg more bandy than the other, he had that queer twisted-about appearance you see so often in men who work in the fields. He had a nut-cracker face —chin and nose trying to come together over a sunken mouth—and it was framed in iron-grey fluffy hair, that looked like a chin-strap of cotton wool sprinkled with coal dust. And he had blue eyes in that old face of his, which were amazingly like a boy's, with that candid expression some quite common men preserve to the end of their days by a rare internal gift of simplicity of heart and rectitude of soul.

The genius of Conrad was directed to intensifying the life of a man and a woman and contrasting that intensity with the slacker, ragged commentary of their real circumstances. His characters live on the edge of a great anxiety, an unbearable exasperation, a threatened loss. They are faced by the sardonic refusal of life to play up. He got this last effect even in his picture of native life. Take this scene from *The Outcast,* in the native compound where Babalatchi has been talking about the tragedy of his race. He is sitting among the domestic noises:

> From under the house the thumping of wooden pestles husking the rice started with unexpected abruptness. The weak but clear voice in the yard again urged, "Blow up the embers, O brother!" Another voice answered, drawling in modulated, thin sing-song, "Do it yourself, O shivering pig!" and the drawl of the last words stopped short as if the man had fallen into a deep hole.

That slackening of the tension, that anti-climax is typical Conrad. It is the grimace of the bear with the sore head; but at its best (that is to say when it is done in terms of life itself), its dramatic effectiveness is perfect, even if as philosophy it strikes one as the rather *voulu* anarchism of the exile.

V. S. PRITCHETT

GERMANY TO-DAY

Pattern of Conquest. By JOSEPH C. HARSCH. *Heinmann.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

When Mr. Harsch left Berlin, where he was correspondent for the *Christian Science Monitor,* Hitler was on top of the world, safe apparently on his Eastern as well as on the North Sea frontier. Yet Mr. Harsch, without the faith or illusions of the Englishman who always wins the last battle, believed that he could be defeated. His recipe was for the United States to come one hundred per cent. into the war and to build up with Britain a highly specialised, mechanical army which could be used to invade Europe at many points. Writing before June, 1941, and assuming the continued neutrality of Russia, Mr. Harsch could only tell us that bombing and blockade would never defeat Germany, that the German Army was superb, but the German civilian morale would break down when, but not until, military defeats had undermined the almost universal expectation of victory. Mr. Harsch only suggested a long series of raids along an immense coast-line; someday one of the raids would succeed in forming a bridgehead and turn into an invasion because someday Hitler's troops and transport would wear out under the strain of being moved from one end of Europe to the other. This conception of victory was heroic rather than convincing; it sounds more plausible in the light of Russian victories which Mr. Harsch, who adds a postscript after the invasion of Russia, did not begin to foresee.

Mr. Harsch ludicrously underestimated Russia's part in the story. He did not know the Red Army. The Nazi Army, on the other hand, he has clearly studied with great care. He stresses, even more than Mr. Shirer, the democratic structure of this army in which officers and men eat together and treat each other as equals; in which the problem of saluting as a method of discipline is solved, he tells us, by men of all ranks saluting each other. Among other remarkable details are his observation of the immense part still played in the German victories of 1940 by horses and mules; the mechanised revolution, he explains, had taken place and was decisive, but the victory was largely carried through and celebrated with pomp in Berlin by the foot soldiers and horse-drawn vehicles which still formed, in the summer of 1940, the vast bulk of the German Army. About the morale and spirit of this army Mr. Harsch is in no doubt. The military leaders of Germany used the defeat of 1918 to discover the follies of a class army and to rid itself of the defects that still bedevil British efforts to begin to construct one of comparable efficiency.

The crux, then, is German home morale. Mr. Harsch tells us that it is true that the Germans were panic-stricken by the outbreak of war with Britain and France in September, 1939, and he believes that it would have been worth any risk for Britain to have begun bombing immediately Hitler invaded Poland whatever the R.A.F. inferiority in planes. That opportunity missed, the German people accepted Hitler's victories as inevitable. Though the public remains quite unenthusiastic and almost uninterested by his conquests, sharply critical of the regime, seriously upset at first by the bombing of Berlin, comparatively trivial though it has been, full of grumbles about rationing and shortages, yet home morale will remain, in Mr. Harsch's opinion, "adequate" for Hitler's purpose until his war machine suffers reverses. At that moment Mr. Harsch tells us it will be worth while to appeal to Germans.

> Then, and then only, would be the time to launch a programme for a new Europe and attempt to show to the German people that defeat might not be so harmful to them as they now believe it to be.

It will be seen that Mr. Harsch is a practical man, untroubled by any unhistoric theory about the innate characteristics of the German people. He quotes examples to show how easily and thoroughly German middle-class people assume that for a Pole to kill a German is an outrage, while for Germans to kill many Poles is in the nature of things. He might have pointed out that a similar scale of values has existed in South Africa and in part of the United States as between negroes and white men or between the British ruling class and their coloured dependents all over the Empire. The truth, as he himself remarks, is that nations are not fundamentally different in these matters. "Give to any energetic nation on earth," he writes, "a race doctrine like the Nazi, add a superlative army with a tradition of militarism in the background, and a thoroughly modern, efficient industrial machine, and you create the essential framework for a Nazi State. Put it in control of a group of political opportunists deriving from the lowest strata of the nation's society, sharing all the irrational emotions of that society in their most primitive form, and you have the approach to other nations of Nazism. Give your own people a sparkling prospect by promising them the overlordship of a Continent. . . ." And given luck in their opponents and the historically right moment, such a people may conquer and maintain their Empire—how long? As long as the Romans or the Spanish or the 1,000 years in Hitler's boast? Mr. Harsch does not guess. But he does better. He tells us, in a remarkably convincing chapter, of the initial mistake that ruined Hitler's chance of success.

Never, he says correctly, since the days of Charlemagne, was Europe so ready to become united. Almost all the ruling systems and personalities had lost their authority. When Hitler conquered Holland, France or Czechoslovakia, tens of thousands who had been ready to fight for their country and their liberty decided that it was no longer worth while. Many of them accepted German rule, and given a little psychological sense, might have settled down to absorption in the New Order. But the Nazis, who usually began with cleverly considered blandishments, soon threw away their chance. Mr. Harsch quotes one instance after another. It was the ban on prayers for the Royal Family in Holland which restored the waning prestige in an exiled monarchy; it was—he tells the story in horrifying detail—the beating and torture and murder of Czech students at Ruzyn that made it certain that Czech patriotism would revive to put up stubborn resistance to German overlordship.

Mr. Harsch tells his story with persuasive authority. He provides an illuminating chapter about Nazi methods of dealing with the foreign press in Berlin. If all the foreign correspondents had always stood together, as they did on one memorable occasion that he describes, Goebbels and the propaganda machine would have failed. But the Nazis were clever at giving scoops and favours to "good" correspondents. The independent journalist who insisted on sending out the most honest story that would pass the censor was heavily handicapped; his editor at home might be inclined to prefer a correspondent who stood well with the authorities and got in first with the news. To their credit be it said that most of the foreign correspondents preferred the disadvantages of honesty. In the long run history is likely to record that the ultimate defeat of the Nazis has been due to journalists more than to any other section of society; ever since the days of Ebbutt and Edgar Mowrer they have fought against the doctrine that the truth is what the State or some corrupt or fanatical official wants it to be. Vulnerable though capitalist journalism is, it produces men like Mr. Harsch, who have been able persistently to inform the British and then the American public what the Nazi system is. If they had betrayed their trust Hitler would to-day be victorious.

KINGSLEY MARTIN

THE GOOD-NATURED MAN

The Correspondence of Richard Steele. Edited by RAE BLANCHARD. *Oxford University Press.* 35s.

It is odd, to my mind, that comment about Steele should be so defensive: a legacy, I suppose, from the dreary Victorian habit of summing everybody up in strict, very strict, moral terms, approving or condemning (chiefly condemning) as people adhered or not to their priggish notions of what a human being should be. There is no reason why we should continue to respect their standards. As if Steele needed any apologising for! He was clearly the best-natured man in the world, a most delightful companion,

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ROUTLEDGE KEGAN PAUL

generous to a fault, amusing, vivacious, with merry black eyes and dark complexion, a soldier with an irresistible way with women. The famous series of letters day by day to his wife, every one of which she kept, would prove, apart from other evidences, what a ravishing lover he was. (" Dear Prue . . . If you will be exactly at five at Button's we will go together to the Park or elsewhere and be with you all night, if you condescend to take me out of my Truckle-bed." " Prue, It is unworthy your virtue and merit to be diffident. I'll warrant you all will be well before to-morrow night. I will come home then with cash, and everything else that can please.")

Above all, he enormously enjoyed life, every minute of it, which is more than a Victorian view of morals lends itself to. In these letters we catch sight of him taking pleasure on the wing, and very agreeable it is, too, to contemplate in present circumstances: being taken out as an undergraduate by a friendly don to oysters and claret at a tavern in Oxford in the reign of William and Mary; writing home to Prue amid the friendly chatter of a coffee-house in the reign of Queen Anne (Oh, that we might brush the years aside to hear the voices that were around him, the shy raillery of Addison, Gay, Pope, the rather alarming presence of Swift); taking the air with Prue in a coach in the Park, or going down to Hampton Court in summer; being carried off in his coach by Lord Halifax, dining with the wits of the Kit-Kat Club. So he enjoyed life right up to the last scene we have of him: old and paralysed now, seated on a chair in the open-air, at Llangunnor, watching the village maidens dancing on the green and writing an order upon his agent for a gown as the prize to the best dancer.

Apart even from his whole-hearted enjoyment of life, Steele after all made a very good career for himself. Starting with no prospects at all—both his parents died when he was only a child, and they had no money anyway—Steele got a good education at Charterhouse and Christ Church, thanks to a benevolent uncle. (He was the sort of lad for whom a benevolent uncle sooner or later is apt to turn up.) He then went into the army, became a dashing young officer who at the same time—it was rather original of him—was not ashamed to write, and even to publish from barracks, a work entitled *The Christian Hero*. Less original of him, he married two heiresses in succession, the second of whom, in addition, he was certainly in love with, ardently, passionately, irresistibly. She was the " dear Prue " of the letters, a Welsh beauty from Carmarthen, exacting, as she had a right to be considering her looks and her fortune, and also in love with him no less than he with her. (He had to ask her not to make him ridiculous by for ever sending after him in public places to know where he was and what he was doing, and sometimes protested against having to render her day by day an account of every trifle of his time. In the end he submits and she has her way with him.) And all the while he was actively engaged in writing, politics, the theatre, projects intended to make money but more frequently losing it, doing other people good turns. He has left an imperishable memorial of himself in his founding of the *Tatler* and the *Spectator*, a permanent place in English literature by his essays, if by no other of his writings. What more could even Macaulay want? It is his treatment of Steele in the essay on Addison which needs apologising for, not Steele for the conduct of his life. Steele has always been unduly disregarded by comparison with Addison; but I rather agree with Leigh Hunt: " I prefer open-hearted Steele with all his faults to Addison with all his essays." (Nor, I hope, will that be put down to the natural partiality of a Christ Church man as against Magdalen.)

Miss Blanchard's edition of the Letters is a good example of the kind of thing American scholars are so good at: indefatigable industry, enthusiasm, completeness, accuracy—a useful journeyman service to literature. It may be questioned, however, whether her splitting up the letters into sections, " General Correspondence " and " Family Correspondence," was not a mistake. It makes each section less interesting by itself, whereas it is illuminating to read the private letters to Prue along with all the other letters which reveal his concurrent activities. Besides explaining why he could not always come home to dinner, it gives one a much fuller and more exact picture of his many-sided and vivacious, busy life.

No Cornishman can be expected to pass the error (p. 57) attributing the Edgcumbe family to Devonshire. They have lived in Cornwall since at least the fifteenth century. But no doubt the difference between Devon and Cornwall is hard to discern from the river-banks of Maryland.

A. L. ROWSE

THE WAY THEY HAVE IN THE ARMY

Khaki and Gown. An Autobiography by Field-Marshal LORD BIRDWOOD. *Ward Lock.* 18*s.*

The Life of General Sir Charles Warren. By WATKIN WILLIAMS. *Blackwell.* 25*s.*

Tinned Soldier. By ALEC DIXON. *Right Book Club.* 2*s.* 6*d.* to members.

If these three books were the only evidence, one would have to conclude that Field-Marshals and Generals live dull lives and are rather dull people, but that things are a good deal brighter in the ranks. Great is the gap between a Sergeant and a Field-Marshal, and Mr. Dixon, who enlisted in the Tank Corps, had just reached the rank of Tank Mechanist Sergeant when he decided to leave the Army and try to earn his living by the pen or typewriter; but there is more life in a page of Sergeant Dixon than in the two large volumes which are the mausoleums of Field-Marshal Lord Birdwood and General Sir Charles Warren. On the face of it this is curious, for both of these distinguished soldiers lived vigorous, adventurous, successful lives. The fact is that the mere recording of action or activity is not interesting, so that the biography or autobiography of a General can only be rescued from flatness by the skill of the recorder or the personality of the General. Lord Birdwood's autobiography is not rescued by either, and Warren, though a much more interesting personality, is not helped by a conscientious but flat-footed biographer.

Yet so intrinsically interesting is the life of any human being that even an unskilful biography is always well worth reading. Much the more interesting thing in these two books is the problem—a rather technical problem—which is concerned with the only point at which the life of Lord Birdwood crossed the life of Sir Charles Warren. The two men belonged to the same class, an English version of the German Junker which, at any rate until 1914, supplied the Army with its officers. General Warren was the son of Major Warren of the 55th Regiment, and was born in Bangor in 1840. His grandfather, two brothers, son, and grandson have been or are soldiers. Field-Marshal Birdwood is the son of an Under-Secretary to the Government of Bombay, but his two grandfathers, all his brothers, his son, not to speak of other relations, have been officers; he was born in India in 1865. Thus they started, Warren, who belonged to the not uncommon General Gordon type of mid-Victorian military man, serious and intellectual, a Christian, an officer, and a gentleman, from Bangor through Cheltenham and Woolwich appropriately into the Royal Engineers. " Birdie "—even Sir Dighton Probyn, V.C., calls Lord Birdwood " Birdie " when addressing his " Beloved Lady," the late Queen Alexandra—also a Christian, an officer, and a gentleman, but much smarter and less serious, being an Edwardian where Warren was irremediably Victorian, starting the race of life from Poona, passed through Clifton and Sandhurst to the crack cavalry regiment, the XII Lancers, and later to the XI Bengal Lancers. Warren's subsequent career was terrifically strenuous and serious, exploring and special missions in Asia and Africa. " Birdie's " career has been almost entirely in India, except for the interludes of the South African and 1914 wars. He was a first-class regimental officer of the true British type. Shooting and polo and the paternal attitude of the white officer to the Indian trooper fill a large part of the picture; soldiering is another and higher form of sport and there is no suspicion that it is elsewhere a serious and scientific profession. A quick brain, a good family, and personal charm —Lieutenant Birdwood of the Bengal Lancers climbed quickly into staff appointments and was soon sitting at the right hand of the Commander-in-Chief, Lord Kitchener. (It is characteristic of Lord Birdwood that though he has known intimately Kitchener and many other famous men and though he tells us some good stories about them, he is quite incapable of telling us anything else about them.)

The point at which these two lives, starting from Bangor and Poona, crossed each other was beneath the hill of Spion Kop on the Tugela River in January, 1900. They were both engaged on one of the most curious military operations in the history of British defeats. General Warren was second in command to the Commander-in-Chief, Redvers Buller; Captain Birdwood was on the staff of Lord Dundonald, who was in command of a Mounted Brigade. Buller must have good claims to having been the most incompetent British General who, according to custom, helped us to win wars by being consistently defeated. On the Tugela his objective was the relief of Ladysmith. He committed every fault of which a General is capable. At Spion Kop he handed over the supreme command to Warren and then continually interfered with his operations. Mr. Williams gives the full evidence of what really happened at Spion Kop and in the subsequent operations which led to the relief of Ladysmith. It proves as conclusively as any such evidence can that the disasters were entirely due to Buller and the success to Warren, and that Buller deliberately and in the most underhand manner tried, not without success, to put the blame on Warren. It is characteristic of Lord Birdwood that he appears never to have taken the trouble to study the real facts regarding the strategy and tactics in an extremely interesting campaign in which he actually took part, and just swallows and regurgitates the Buller version of events.

When we turn from these two Generals to Mr. Dixon's book, we are still in the Army, and yet in another world. The life of a private bears the same relation to the life of an officer as the life of an inhabitant of a Shoreditch slum to that of a resident in Claridge's. Mr. Dixon has written an extremely interesting, unembittered, but disturbing book. Only a man who has himself served in the ranks of the Tanks Corps in peacetime could test its accuracy, but it has the air of photographic veracity. It is highly amusing if one can ignore the social implications of the brutalising stupidity and inefficiency in Army organisation revealed by it. And the most disturbing thing about it is that it describes life in the Tank Corps during the seven years which followed the end of the war. The blurb for this book tells us complacently that the British Army " goes on for ever "; apparently and unfortunately so does the War Office.

LEONARD WOOLF

NEW VERSE

Gautama the Enlightened and Other Verse. By JOHN MASEFIELD. *Heinemann.* 5*s.*

The Solitary Man and Other Poems. By RICHARD CHURCH. *Dent.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

Ballad of the Mari Lwyd and Other Poems. By VERNON WATKINS. *Faber.* 6*s.*

Shapes and Sounds, 1941. By MERVYN PEAKE. *Chatto and Windus.* 4*s.* 6*d.*

Eight Oxford Poets. Selected by MICHAEL MEYER and SIDNEY KEYES. *Routledge.* 2*s.* 6*d.*

The poets in this list range in age from the sixties to the twenties, and they are all surprisingly true to their generation. On the present showing Mr. Richard Church, who belongs to a generation which brought analytic thought as well as imagination to bear upon experience, is by far the most impressive. Mr. Masefield is not pre-eminently a thinking poet; nor can it be said that the eight Oxford poets (or their generation) think; they are merely tormented, bewildered, flummoxed by thought. As one of them says:

No remedy for our split mind.

This has been said so often in so many different ways by so many young poets that one has ceased to wonder if it is true, or what it implies if it is true. A bad lookout for poetry, evidently, and for most other things.

The contemporary obsession with the split mind derives in part from Mr. Church's generation, which applied a critical intelligence to the responses of the imagination, and displayed experience in a twofold light. This tampering with the operation of the pure imagination was deeply distrusted twenty-five years ago, when it was a novelty, and the critics in particular were convinced that any critical treatment of the imagination was bound to kill it. It has not killed it; Mr. Church's generation has lasted the pace with surprising success, and the best of his contemporaries are writing better poetry now than they did twenty-five years ago. What distinguishes the poems in Mr. Church's latest volume from the others in this list is that they are a full, clear and responsible answer to experience, in which perception and judgment are equally strong. Mr. Masefield's poetry is not full; it wanders on, sustained by a single thread, a frail but sometimes charming thread, and the work of the Oxford poets is not clear; it is confused. The confusion takes cover behind that stupefying mannered portentousness which is the curse of modern poetry, and is like a heavy overcoat which the poet has to wear all the time, outdoors and indoors, winter and summer. Sometimes he makes to throw it off, but then hastily hugs it round him again, for everybody else is wearing one.

Mr. Church's book is divided into three parts, the first dealing with the war, the second with what he calls "Another War," the war which goes on all the time, the struggle of the individual for salvation or fulfilment. The third part is called "Survivals," and describes some of the fruits of the struggle. This summary gives a rough idea of the shape of this sequence of poems; they make up a sort of spiritual autobiography, covering only a few years but containing the experience of a lifetime. In form they are so organic that it is difficult to quote any of them; a few lines detached from their context give no conception of the whole, for it is the totality of the experience which is so impressive, and in all the poems except a very few that totality is implicit. This is the finest poetry that Mr. Church has yet given us.

The lighter poems in Mr. Masefield's little book are by far the best, and the charming "Shopping in Oxford" is the best of all. In it he enumerates all the delightful things which can be bought, or could be at one time, and counts his blessings: an excellent recreation just now. The poem on Gautama is somewhat tenuous.

Mr. Vernon Watkins's book comes next in importance after Mr. Church's. Mr. Watkins's imagery has a crystalline radiance which tempts one to call it Celtic; he has a fine sense of form and a high idea of style in which the influence of Yeats can be seen. The separate images are clear and striking, unforced and yet unexpected; but the total impression of the longer poems is somewhat hazy, whether because of an undue preponderance of light over shadow (his images seem to cast no shadows), or because of a failure in complete articulation, it is hard to say. He is not influenced by any poet of his own generation; the world of experience he deals with is his own; and he gives the impression of seeing it freshly, for the first time, with, at most, the benevolent shadow of Yeats at his elbow. He has in a very exceptional degree the power to convey delight, and a way of thinking which cuts completely across the beaten tracks of thought along which the political poets have led so many credulous novices. The quality of his poetry is extremely difficult to define, for it has that more essential individuality which is achieved by shedding all obvious individuality. In a certain sense these poems can be appreciated fully only if one is continually aware of what they omit, and the significance of the omissions. Their peculiar clarity is achieved by a purification of experience, which means just now a rejection of most of the ideas that inform contemporary poetry, ideas almost indistinguishable from clap-trap. Mr. Watkins is an original poet.

Shapes and Sounds contains some immensely pictorial verse, and a great deal of flower imagery. The effect is extremely decorative; but the actual experience round which the imagery is draped strikes one as being somewhat commonplace. The versification is skilful.

All the contributors to *Eight Oxford Poets* show a distinct literary aptitude, but only in the case of one, Mr. Sidney Keyes, who seems to be the youngest of them, is it employed with incontestable effect. He is obviously a poet of original talent. All his poetry has shape, significance, and a fine precision of imagery. This group, in general, claim to be Romantic writers, with "little sympathy with the Audenian school of poets." Neither the romantic strain nor the imperviousness to the Audenian school is strikingly perceptible to a detached reader, perhaps because so much of the poetry is imperfectly crystallised. But almost all the contributors show promise.

EDWIN MUIR

GRAMOPHONE NOTES

WALTON: *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra.* Heifetz, with Cincinnati Symphony Orch., cond. Goossens (H.M.V. DB8911-3).

WALTON: *Scapino—A Comedy Overture.* Chicago Symphony Orch., cond. Fr. Stock (Col. LX931).

HAYDN: *Symphony No.* 103 *in E flat.* Hallé Orch., cond. Leslie Heward (Col. DX8170-2).

SAINT-SAENS: *Carnival of the Animals.* Philadelphia Orch., cond. Stokowski (H.M.V. DB8897-9).

TCHAIKOVSKY: *Eugen Onegin: Waltz and Polonaise.* Hallé Orch., cond. Malcolm Sargent (Col. DX 1044).

ADDINSELL: *Warsaw Concerto.* Recorded from the sound-track of the film, "Dangerous Moonlight" (Col. DX1062).

BLOCH: *Suite for Viola and Piano.* William Primrose and Fritz Kitzinger (H.M.V. DB8900-3).

BACH: *Sonata for Viola.* Watson Forbes and Denise Lassimonne (Decca K1041-2).

BEETHOVEN: *Thirty-Two Variations in C minor, for Piano.* Denis Matthews (Col. DX1060-1).

WEBER: *Sonata No. 1 in C, op. 24, for Piano.* Mewton-Wood (Decca K1038-40).

Album of Piano Pieces by Couperin, Rameau, Daquin, Debussy, Ibert, Ravel, and Poulenc. Played by Phyllis Sellick (Rimington, Van Wyck).

FARMER: *Fair Phyllis I saw*, and

TOMKINS: *See, see the Shepherd's Queen*, and

CHAS. WOOD: *Music, when soft voices die.* The Fleet Street Choir (Decca K1046).

VERDI: *Aida*: "May laurels crown thy brow," and "Thy names so holy." Joan Hammond, with Hallé Orch., cond. Heward (Col. DB2060).

The issue of the Walton Violin Concerto is one for which we ought in any case to be grateful, and the work does, of course, gain immeasurably from an assured performance in which we can really hear all the parts. Several hearings have not, however,

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EYRE & SPOTTISWOODE

caused me to alter the opinion expressed in these pages after the first performance. The work still seems to me weakened by its spasmodic structure, and by the composer's seeming inability to think harmonically; contrapuntal "filling-up" is no substitute for a solid structure of harmony. Apart from this one cannot help deprecating Heifetz's tendency to make every *cantabile* passage sound as if it were by Glazounov. Again, the climaxes throughout the concerto seem too large for the general texture: some of the heavier orchestration, with its brass octaves wading about in a tearing river of strings, reminds one oddly of Elgar. Yet the beauties remain, and they are very considerable indeed. Most of the first movement is ravishingly lovely, the recapitulation a real stroke of genius; and only Walton could have invented that little tatter which is waved to and fro by the wind in the coda. The Finale is only less fine, and the cadenza—here marvellously played—is most moving in the skill with which it sums up the feeling of the whole. The recording is in the main a good one, but the tone of the solo violin deteriorates towards the centre of the discs.

Scapino is as good in its way as *œuvres de circonstance* usually are. If uninspired by any real imaginative glow, it is as clever and witty as Strauss, of whom, in his impish moods, it reminds one. I do not care greatly for the apparent quotation from *Scheherazade;* on the other hand the augmentation of the main theme reveals that it possesses depth as well as flexibility and humour. Had the composer so wished, this piece might, one feels, have amounted to rather more than it does. The performance is a very finished one and the recording agreeable in quality.

The very late example of Haydn's mature style brings home to us his imaginative range, his power of combining within a single work deep feeling and a humorous insight into everyday concerns. There is not a paragraph that one could mistake for Dittersdorf. In the Andante, for instance, that little wind and horn cadence gives as it were the flicker of a smile to show that the composer's statement is not really as serious as it seems. One wonders, indeed, if Haydn is not here commenting on the self-importance of some princeling at Esterhazy. Yet there is wonder and even a certain mystery in the symphony as well. This is a very fine set, affectionately played and faithfully recorded.

I think we may agree to call the *Carnival of Animals* an only fairly good joke ("Pianists" is undeniably funny), with one genuine moment of music in it ("*Le Cygne*"). Yet what a worldly, prosaic fellow Saint-Saëns was, to be sure! There is not an ounce of poetry in his images, as comparison of his cuckoo with Delius's ought to be enough to show. Like other American recordings this month, the issue is sparkling without too much coarseness; but I can't feel that it was worth the outlay in orchestra, conductor and time.

Who shall demonstrate that music can be both light and poetical at once? Why, Tchaikovsky, of course! Listen to the detail in the Waltz from *Eugen Onegin* and perceive the difference between genius and a superlative talent like Saint-Saëns. This should be a popular record, though Dr. Sargent takes the Polonaise a shade slow for my taste.

"Warsaw Concerto" has, we are told, swept the country. And what, may one ask, did the sweeping? Surely those ceaseless arpeggios which are Mr. Addinsell's apology for pianistic writing. I yield to none in admiration of Rachmaninoff, but his style is one which you imitate at your peril; Mr. Addinsell evidently considers valour the better part of discretion. Being recorded from the sound-track, the music rather lacks immediacy, but the composer's shameless style comes through all right.

The Bloch *Suite* puts me in a quandary. I should like to praise the sheer nobility of this incomparably performed issue, but cannot find it in me to do so. With all my admiration for Bloch at his best, I feel that this diffuse and grievous work will not even please those who are prepared to give music their most serious attention; and it certainly will not please the others. There are, of course, skilful paragraphs and poignant images scattered among its arid, closely printed pages; but—always Bloch's besetting sin,—the themes are hopelessly fragmentary and undifferentiated, and the form is not at all clear. Matters are not improved by a rather dead recording, from which the piano suffers especially.

The Bach Viola Sonata may be confidently recommended to those who dread the composer at his more severe. The texture is relatively simple and tuneful, the performance most distinguished.

The piano issues this month are of particular interest as well as of high excellence. Denis Matthews has chosen a most rebarbative work for his début in recording. These variations of Beethoven are a series of hard sayings in the manner of Blake's *Marriage of Heaven and Hell*; like the latter, they are profound and disquieting. Luckily, Mr. Matthews unites a remarkable technique to a very rare sensibility, and to say that his playing is entirely equal to these musico-dramatic epigrams is as high praise as I know how to bestow.

It is useless to pretend that Weber's First Piano Sonata is as good as the Second or the Fourth; but, despite the footling first movement, the work is unquestionably worth playing, if only for the charm of the Adagio and the sparkle of the famous Moto Perpetuo. I am unfamiliar with Mr. Mewton-Wood's playing in general, but here it is something more than adequate, though I could have desired a more even tempo in the Finale.

My only criticism of Miss Sellick's wholly delightful and well chosen album is that the unspectacular nature of her playing may hide from the less discerning how truly gifted a pianist she is. Perhaps I can best describe its quality by saying that it is as un-German (i.e., unmessy) as possible. Miss Sellick excels in a perfect staccato, which makes her performance of Ravel's Toccata something to write home about. Her Couperin, her Poulenc, are examples of a fine taste carried through into the smallest details; her Debussy is beautifully sensitive in *Reflets dans l'Eau*, delicately brilliant in *Feux d'Artifice*—a piece few pianists bother about, but in which she suggests the feeling of excitement and romance that forms the background of a firework display. Her album, then, is a valuable addition to recorded piano music, and once more we owe a debt to Messrs. Rimington, Van Wyck, for their courage and discernment.

When the last record of the Fleet Street Choir appeared, I made the foolish, but perhaps pardonable, assertion that it was a "male" choir. My mistake, for which I am sorry, was simply due to the extraordinary purity of the soprano singing—a quality which strikes me again to-day. The Tomkins "ballet" is a contrapuntal delight—a most difficult feat triumphantly brought off; and the Wood setting of Shelley's poem is a charming, if unoriginal, piece which, taken together with the older songs, demonstrates the continuity of the English tradition.

I should like to hear Miss Hammond in the part of Aïda: she conveys that heroine's obstinate courage and tenderness very well indeed. Unfortunately the echo in this recording is very bad.

EDWARD SACKVILLE WEST

Week-end Competitions

No. 626

Set by Thomas Smallbones

The Royal Academy habit of using some lines of verse as a title or subtitle for their pictures was unluckily not used by the Old Masters or the more reputable moderns. The usual prizes are offered for re-naming any three of the following with quotation-titles: (1) La Gioconda; (2) Bosch's The Temptation of St. Anthony; (3) Botticelli's Venus; (4) Van Gogh's Postman; (5) Rodin's Penseur; (6) Giorgione's Fête Champêtre; (7) Picasso's

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Guernica; (8) Seurat's La Baignade; (9) Rubens's Rape of the Sabine Women; (10) Rembrandt's Ganymede; (11) Sickert's Ennui; (12) Hogarth's Harlot's Progress.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Monday, February 9.

2. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 623

Set by G. W. Stonier

Lord Woolton has announced that "cats engaged on work of national importance" are to receive an allowance of powdered milk. A conversation between two cats on this topic (limit, 200 words) is requested from competitors.

Report by G. W. Stonier

Cat-observers have been on the prowl. While the results of their investigation are being studied at the Ministry of Food, I cannot do better than quote a few snatches from conversations overheard:

"Bin on night-shift these three weeks at Flats, and my eyes that bad with gettin' no fish I can't hardly see 'em, the rats."

"Powdered milk for workin' class cats ain't much."

"But there's allus cod for that there de Beau Tibbs . . . and 'er that lazy she won't wash her own . . . there, I won't say it. But I've seed 'em take a comb to her."

"'Er? Spiteful as a woman she is. Calls me Skim-milk and Flat-cat . . . as though I could 'elp my figure." (MRS. E. GIMBLETT)

"Of course, as pet of the wife of a Cabinet Minister, my rations are assured."

"Do you know if mothers are to receive a special allowance? I'm expecting again, March."

"Congratulations, dear. Who . . . ?"

"The black and white at 23, I think. But motherhood on powdered milk's no joke. Sorry I wasn't smart enough to get a nice safe Government job like some cats I know."

"My dear, isn't that a rather human remark to make? I have my troubles. There's not much company in Downing Street, and all the roofs are frightfully high. I'm sure you're doing a grand job on the home front."

"Well, I must be streaking off. I'm on mouse-watching to-night."

"Good-bye, dear. Trust in God and keep your powder dry." (STANLEY J. SHARPLESS)

Tommy: I thought your coat was sleeker than before,
And you of ampler girth.
What other jobs like yours are there in store?
I'd like a berth.
Tabby: Dozens, I know. Some taste Icelandic cod.
Tommy: Too dangerous a steak!
Tabby: Some purr the Waafs to sleep—or, still more odd—
Keep firemen awake.
Some give their whiskers for the radio,
And some their precious skins
To keep the Russians warm in ice and snow
Against the Huns and Finns.
(W. J. HALLIDAY)

Col. Black: Well, Stripes, suppose we'll come to it sooner or later—"Powdered Milk for the Fighting Forces," what?

Major Stripes: Yes. Mark you, sir, I can still hunt with the best of 'em! Vermin not my line, tho'—prefer spot of game or rabbitin'!

Col. Black: Quite! But I say, old man, what about the gels, eh? Young Ginger had a devil of a scrap with Lulu. "No use crooning 'Room 504' round here," says she, "had enough bringing up the last red heads this winter. No liver! No lights! Nuts for me as a nursing mother on salt cod!"

Major Stripes: Can't blame her—awful ass, Ginger! Wouldn't know the difference between powdered milk and Bristol cream. Damn it! He eats HORSE! Mind you, I eat Spratts' Food myself——sauté with rabbit gravy—tones up the coat.

Col. Black: Ah! Miss cod's head myself! No phosphorus y'know. Chef's pretty good here—skate poché yesterday!

Major Stripes: Aye, sir. But you weren't weaned on Powdered Milk!

Col. Black: By Gad! No, sir! (DORIS)

On the whole, cats seem to be indignant about rationing, war, Lord Woolton, the class struggle; and one even disapproved, in passing, of this competition. There were aristocratic cats and plebeian cats. There was a Socratic cat, but no Confucian cat, I'm sorry to say, no Aldous Huxley cat. I recommend that the first prize be given to G. de Vavasour for a conversation both elegant and worldly wise, and the second to Guy Innes for a lively clash of idioms.

FIRST PRIZE.

Malkin: The State allows, Puff, I observe,
Some *powdered milk* to cats who serve.
Puff: 'Tis well enough for those who choose
The dignity of cats to lose
By work, not wit.
Malkin: I'd scorn such dole.
Who sells his labour sells his soul.
My crone, of necromantic skill,
Now plies a market darker still.
I lend my charm: supply *bon ton,*
Cachet, *esprit*, *allure*, *élan*.
These bring me many a tasty dish;
Black meat, black poultry, and black fish.
I'll wager *you* have not pursued
A mouse for years—
Puff: Pray don't be crude.
Observe me: I am sleek and trim.
Humans attend my slightest whim.
Before the fire I dine and sleep:
Am ornamental for my keep.
On mild days I may take the air
And watch the people waiting there,
Patient, in queues, in hopes to get
Some dainty tit-bit for their pet.
But those lean drudges I deplore
Who'd kill a rat, and eat it—raw!
And have for pay—not even warm—
A dose of milk in powdered form.
Malkin: A fit reward for those who soil
The name of cat with servile toil!
G. DE VAVASOUR

SECOND PRIZE.

Mehitabel: 'Lo, stranger—guess you've heard of me. I'm Mehitabel, the Alley Cat, from Newyoik by bomber, and my slogan is "What-the-hell, what-the-hell!" and, boy, am I *tough*? Don Marquis wrote my life story. Say, what's this powdered milk racket you have over here? Do you inhale it—like "snow"?

Tom: Blimey, sis, I'm like you—I ain't been raised a pet. Since I was blitzed out o' the factory, I ain't seen a drop o' milk, wet or powdered. It ain't for the likes of us—it's for the privileged classes.

Mehitabel: Privileged classes? Among cats? Ain't there a war on?

Tom: Yus—but they don't reckernise it socially. These here privileged cats lives in Kensington, with little badges o' membership o' the Animals Protection Society round their necks.

Mehitabel: Doing work o' national importance?

Tom: Yus.

Mehitabel: What is it?

Tom: Living in Kensington, o' course. GUY INNES

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